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ANCIENT HISTORIANS OF INDIA

ANCIENT HISTORIANS OF INDIA

A Study in Historical Biographies

VISHWAMBHAR SHARAN PATHAK

राज्य संग्रहालय पुस्तकालय लखनऊ
14-3-67

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PITARAU VANDE

FOREWORD

It is commonly held that there was no sense of history in pre-Muslim India, and that, with the exception of the work of Kalhaṇa, Hindu India produced no historical writing worth mentioning. It is of course possible that other regions than Kashmir had their chroniclers, whose works have now vanished. But, if this was the case, it is surprising that there is so little indication of their existence.

Whether or not India had a sense of history, she had a lively sense of the past, though this past was generally visualised in legendary terms. Moreover, there is no doubt that certain historical figures, such as Chandragupta Maurya and Pushyamitra Śunga, were remembered long after their deaths in the courts of later Indian kings. Other great figures of mediaeval India have been commemorated in romanticised biographies which, for want of better materials, form important sources for the study of the political history of the times. Texts such as these have often been treated rather naively by both Indian and European historians, and hitherto no serious attempt has been made to understand the presuppositions and the literary conventions according to which they were written. My friend Dr. V. S. Pathak has, in this volume, rendered sterling service to the study of Indian history and historiography by his brilliant pioneering work on this subject. I believe that he has blazed a new trail and that our approach to sources of this character should be radically revised in the light of his researches. I heartily commend this very original study to all students of pre-Muslim India.

A. L. Basham
Professor of the History of South Asia
University of London

February 1963

PREFACE

In order to experience the life of a sensuous man, so the legend goes, the soul of Śaṅkarāchārya once entered into the dead body of Amaruka, the amorous king who had composed the lyrical *Śataka*. Naturally, the resurrected Amaruka behaved neither like his old self nor as a mystic yogi. It was a sorry spectacle of a dispassionate ascetic, mimicking the amorous dalliances of royal romance. Recently some such thing has happened when, having studied the historical works of Bāṇa, Bilhaṇa and others, the scholars tried to infuse modern concepts into the dead world of mediaeval times. This reconstruction is the resurrected Amaruka, in entirety neither the Mediaeval nor the Modern, but, like the black and white elements of the Spotted Brahma of Rāmānuja, each negating the existence of the other.

The present work is attempted with the intention of seeing whether, when the Śaṅkarāchārya of the legend returns to his old self, it is possible for him to know the dead Amaruka without jumping into his skin; whether it is a feasible proposition to reconstruct the mediaeval edifice without using present day material in the form of 20th century concepts.

When, on the basis of the present study, we ventured to reply to the above question affirmatively, a none too sympathetic friend pointed out, with a bantering smile, that even if it is tentatively admitted that we can really know the past from its vestiges, literary and otherwise, our work, which is simply an introduction to the critique of some aspects of Hindu historiography, based on merely five historical narratives of the Early Mediaeval Age, does not as yet entitle us to answer the question. We frankly plead guilty to the charge that our study is restricted to a few of the Mediaeval historians. However, in order to avoid the pseudoscopic vision, which a person writing on a mere fragment of so vast a subject as Indian history is likely to have, in the first chapter we have tried to cover the period of a millennium and a half, from the Early Vedic age to the advent of the Early Mediaeval. But here, our efforts are mainly directed at making the rays emitted from ancient traditions converge into a tiny image which could be fused with the central figure of the Mediaeval, giving the latter a correct stereoscopic depth vision. Fortunately for us, the continuity of the Bhṛigvāṅgiras school of historiography through the ages, enabled us to link the early historiographical traditions with those of the Mediaeval age. Bāṇa is not only the first historical writer of this age but he also represents the highest water-mark of the ancient historiography of the Bhṛigvāṅgirases. With the single exception of Kalhaṇa, who like the Morning star could outdare the Sun of modern historical writings, other mediaeval writers generally adhered to the beaten track. Thus this study, though it mainly deals with only five writers, presents a representative selection of the schools of Hindu historiography. Like the moving lamp of Kālidāśa's imagery, the study sheds light only on the royal highway—there are indeed many byways and more alleys, which, for the exigency of time and space, have been left out. None the less, it is hoped that the conclusion would not be vitiated by this omission. The observation of the critic mentioned above is, therefore, correct, but may not be cogent.

The following chapters, then, attempt at revealing the mediaeval methods of historical organization and inference, based upon the concepts of the past, expressed or implied in the historical narratives. An appendix, which is certainly not an unnecessary appendage here, is added to show how, besides throwing light on the historical mentality of mediaeval India, this study of historiography may suggest new ways for reconstructing the history of the past.

Here, we have deliberately avoided discussing the views contained in propositions such as 'the ancient Indians lacked historical sense', 'the supreme lesson of *śānta-rasa* smothered their biographical interest', 'Hinduism and Buddhism refused to attach real importance to the facts of history', etc. Like all half-truths, these are false. They mainly arose from a 19th century image of India in which she was represented as having "let the legions thunder past and plunged in thought again". Born in the ignorance of the Romantic age, they may be allowed to die unseen.

I am grateful to Dr. J. G. de Casparis for his kindness in going through many of the chapters of my thesis. Words fail me to express my sense of obligation which I owe to my supervisor Professor A. L. Basham, but for whom I could not have completed the work, and which has now further deepened by his kindness in writing a short and sweet foreward to this book.

V. S. PATHAK

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V. S. P.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD vii

PREFACE ix

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS xi

ABBREVIATIONS xiv

I THE BEGINNINGS OF HISTORICAL TRADITIONS 1

II THE *Harshacharita* 30

III THE *Vikramāṅkadeva-charita* 56

IV THE *Vikramāṅkābhyudaya* 84

V THE *Pṛithvīrāja-Vijaya* 98

VI HISTORY IN HISTORICAL NARRATIVES 137

APPENDIXES

Under the Shadow of a Symbolist 149

The *Agni-kula* Legend; The Modern and the Mediaeval Myths 166

BIBLIOGRAPHY 173

INDEX 179

ABBREVIATIONS

As. Res.:	Asiatic Researches
ABORI:	Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
Ait:	Aitareya
AIHT:	Ancient Indian Historical Traditions by F. E. Pargiter
Av:	Atharva-veda
BKI:	Bombay Karnatak Inscriptions
BORI:	Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
Br.:	Brāhmaṇa
BVB:	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
Chh. Up.:	Chhandogya Upanishad
CII:	Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum
CTHC:	The Harshacharita translated by Cowell and Thomas
DKD:	Dynasties of the Kanarese Districts by J. F. Fleet
EC:	Epigraphia Carnatica
EHD:	*Early History of Deccan* Ed. by G. Yazdani
EI:	Epigraphia Indica
ERE:	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics
GOS:	Gaekwad's Oriental Series
GPM:	*The Gotra-Pravana-Mañjarī*, Ed. and tr. by Prof. J. Brough
HC:	*Harshacharita* Ed. by A. A. Fuehrer
HIL:	*History of Indian Literature* by M. Winternitz
HOS:	Harvard Oriental Series
HSL	History of Sanskrit Literature
HSCL:	History of Sanskrit (Classical) Literature
IA:	Indian Antiquary
IB:	*Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol. III, by N. G. Majumdar.
IHQ:	Indian Historical Quarterly
JAOS:	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBBRAS:	Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
JBORS:	Journal of Bihar Orissa Research Society
JRAS:	Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland
JRASB:	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal
JUB:	Journal of the University of Bombay
NSC:	Navasāhasāṅkacharita
NSP:	Nirnaya Sagar Press
PV:	Pṛithvīrāja-Vijaya
QJMS:	Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society
RV:	Ṛigveda
ŚA:	Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka
Saṁ:	Saṁhitā
ŚB:	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa
SBE:	Sacred Books of the East

SI:	*Selection Inscriptions*, Vol. I, by D. C. Sircar
SII:	South Indian Inscriptions
SJGM:	Singhi Jain Granth Mala
Taitt:	Taittirīya
VA:	Vikramāṅkābhyudaya
VDC:	Vikramāṅkadevacharita
VS:	Vikrama Saṁvata
ZDMG:	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesselschaft.

"In any age of any society the study of history, like other social activities, is governed by the dominant tendencies of the time and the place."

A. Toynbee, *Study of History*, Vol. I, p. 1.

"In some subsequent age the critical scholar in accordance with his own theoretical judgments selects from bygone contemporary observations. We thus arrive at 'pure history', according to the faith of the school of history prevalent in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This notion of historians, of history devoid of aesthetic prejudice, of history devoid of any reliance on metaphysical principles and cosmological generalizations, is a figment of the imagination."

A. N. Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, p. 12

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS OF INDIAN HISTORICAL TRADITIONS

Rise of the Historical Tradition

STRAY VERSES, celebrating martial exploits and munificence of kings, constitute the earliest known form of historical literature in India. The *Ṛigveda* explicitly makes a reference to royal eulogies as a form of composition especially popular amongst kings.[1] Short metrical accounts of royal liberality (*dānastutis*), which are inserted into the religious hymns of the *Ṛigveda*, are the surviving fragments of this class of literature. Some of the divine eulogies were evidently based on royal eulogies.[2] But it is strange that there is hardly any royal eulogy in complete form in this collection of more than 1,000 hymns. This fact is all the more intriguing when we find almost complete poems in praise of priests.[3] As a few verses eulogising kings of this time are anonymously quoted in the Brāhmaṇa literature,[4] the conclusion becomes almost irresistible that royal eulogies were composed during this period although the *Ṛigveda*, which mainly contains poems of religious significance and content, did not include them in complete and original form. The bulk of this eulogistic and historical poetry seems to have continued as a floating mass of literature, the existence of which is attested by sporadic references in the Vedic literature to *gāthā* and *nārāśaṁsī*—both literary genres of a historical nature, which did not belong to the ritualistic tradition but which, being provided with a ritualistic setting, were included in it for religious purposes. That they were engrafted on the ritualistic tradition is clear from the fact that they were not accorded full religious status. *Gāthās* and *nārāśaṁsīs* were sharply distinguished from religious songs. They were regarded as the products of mere human beings,[5] and as such much less sacrosanct than the *ṛiks*, which were looked upon as divine, revealed and sacred. The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* further describes *gāthā-nārāśaṁsī* as the baser kind of *brahma*[6] and condemns the acceptance of gifts from one who recites them.[7] *Gāthā* and *nārāśaṁsī* are generally classed with *itihāsa* and *purāṇa*[8] and this discloses their affiliation with the historical tradition. Moreover, the few examples of *gāthā* and *nārāśaṁsī*, which are preserved in Vedic literature, clearly display their historical nature.[9] This is also indicated by the injunction that, on the occasion of horse-sacrifice, the Kshatriya lute-player should sing the *gāthās* celebrating the heroic deeds of the sacrificer.[10]

---

[1] *Rājānaḥ na praśastibhiḥ somāsaḥ gobhiḥ añjate yajñaḥ na sapta dhātribhiḥ.* IX, 10, 3.

[2] For example, *RV*, VII, 6. where epithets 'high imperial ruler' (verse 1) 'blessed sovereign of the earth, (verse, 2) are given to Indra and Agni, and their heroic deeds—the destruction of the forts, etc.,—are described.

[3] *RV*, VII, 33 is a uniform *sūkta* of the Vasishṭha family. Geldner (*Vedische Studien*, II, 129 ff) thinks that originally it formed a part of the *ākhyāna* of the Vasishṭha family. III. 33 is a similar hymn of the Viśvāmitras.

[4] The *gāthās* about Marutta Āvīkshita, Kraivya Pāñchāla, in *Ait. Br.* VIII, 21; *ŚB.*, XIII, 5,4,6; see also the lists of kings consecrated to the Great Consecration of Indra (*Ait. Br.* VIII, 21-23) and of those who performed horse-sacrifice (*ŚB*, XIII, 5,4, 1 ff).

Further, the later tradition embodied in the *Nirukta* and the *Bṛihaddevatā* contains references to *itihāsa* and *ākhyāna* in the *Ṛigveda*.[11] Explaining a verse of the tenth *maṇḍala*, Yāska remarks that it is a mixture of *ṛik*, *gāthā* and *itihāsa*.[12] The *Bṛihaddevatā* quotes the views of Bhāguri, Yāska[13] and Śaunaka[14] who regard various verses of the *Ṛigveda* as alluding to *itihāsa*. Śākaṭāyana describes one complete hymn (X, 192) as *itihāsa-sūkta*.[15] Likewise the *Nirukta* and the *Bṛihaddevatā* detect allusions to *ākhyānas* in the hymns of the *Ṛigveda*.[16] Even if this evidence of the later period is discounted, the references in the *Ṛigveda* itself to royal eulogies, *gāthās* and *nārāśaṁsīs* strongly suggest the existence of an oral tradition of historical compositions which sometimes influenced the fixed and written religious tradition.

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[5] *Ait. Br.* VII, 18. (Keith, p. 309). *Kāt. Śrau. Sū*, XV, 156; Viśvarūpa on Yājñavalkya I. 45.

[6] I, 3, 2, 6. The *Kāṭhaka samihitā* (XIV, 5) asserts that both *Gāthā* and *nārāśamsī* are false. cp. *Ait. Araṇyaka*, II, 3, 6 and *ŚB.* I, 1,1,4.

[7] I, 3, 2, 7.

[8] *AV*, *XV*, 5, 11-12: *ŚB*, XI, 5, 6, 8: *Tait Ār.*, II, 9-11.

[9] See *supra* p. 1 fn. 4. [10] *Kātyāyana S.S.*, XX, 2, 7.

[11] *Nirukta*, II, 10, 24, X, 26, XII, 10, *Bṛihaddevatā*, III, 156, IV, 46, VII, 153; VI, 107; 109.

[12] IV, 6. [13] VI, 107. [14] VII, 163.

[15] *Bṛihaddevatā*, VIII, 11; see also VI, 107.

[16] *Nirukta* V, 21; XI, 19:25:34:XII,41,X,10: *Bṛihaddevatā* I, 53, 36:VII,84.

It seems that in the beginning the historical tradition, of which royal eulogies, *gāthās* and *nārāśaṁsīs* were the parts, was not separate from the ritualistic tradition. Both were developed by the members of the priestly class. The Vāsishṭhas and the Bhṛigvāṅgirases, who were responsible for the development of historical tradition, played a vital role in the growth of sacred tradition also.[17] The *Ṛigveda*, a religious book *par excellence*, often breathes the courtly atmosphere[18] and contains elements of secular literature.[19] Royal eulogies and other historical compositions were utilised in the performance of religious rituals. Later, however, primarily for religious purposes, those poems which had a religious bearing were selected from the composite lore and collected as the *Ṛigveda*. Naturally, when its literary form and wordings were unalterably fixed, and when constant usage over a considerable time gave it a sanctity, the religious book came to be regarded as revealed, and the secular poetry was kept scrupulously separate. Thus two traditions started. From time to time, attempts were made to bring the historical tradition into the religious fold. The historical compositions were described as *itihāsa-veda* in the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Upanishads*.[20] But they could never get the full status of religious works. Though influenced by the religious tradition and in turn influencing it, the historical tradition existed separately.

Forms of Historical Composition

The oral tradition of history, at least from the later Vedic age, had five distinct forms—*gāthā*, *nārāśaṁsī*, *ākhyāna*, *itihāsa* and *purāṇa*. From the early Vedic age, we have indisputable evidence only for *gāthā* and *nārāśaṁsī*.

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[17] See *infra*, pp. 19ff.

[18] Geldner, *Vedische Studien* II, 154. Also Pischel, *ibid*, p. 120.

[19] See *Bṛihaddevatā*, I, 30 ff.

[20] *Ś.B.*, XIII, 4,3,12: *Chh. Up*. VII, 1,2. See also the *Arthaśāstra*, 1, 3.

Originally the word *gāthā* simply meant a song, but gradually it came to indicate a distinct genre of literary composition.[21] As *nārāśaṁsī-gāthā*, it consisted of those songs which celebrated the heroic deeds of ancient rulers and sages.[22] Allied with it were the *Indra-gāthās*[23] and the *Yajña-gāthās*[24], which respectively recounted the glorious acts of Indra and the performance of the sacrifices in the past.

The word *gāthā* occurs only in the later strata of the *Ṛigveda*[25], where it is especially associated with the *Kāṇva* priests of the *Bhṛigvāṅgiras* group.[26] It was also connected with the Visvāmitras, though it is not certain whether that family and an ancestor of Visvāmitra were named *Gāthin* because of their association with this form of literature. Further, the late occurrence of the word need not necessarily be construed to indicate that it came into existence later, especially as a Ṛigvedic hymn makes reference to an ancient *gāthā*.[27]

The word *narāśaṁsa* with which *nārāśaṁsī* is connected, occurs in the *Ṛigveda* in different forms and contexts.[28] As early as the Vedic age, it had developed various shades of meaning.[29] Derivatively it means 'the praise of men' generally in the sense of 'praises celebrating men.'[30] Sometimes it also meant 'the praises composed by men'.[31] Other meanings of the word developed out of this central concept—the praises celebrating men—, and were, in fact, its extensions. Thus, the nārāśaṁsa is intricately interwoven with the cult of the deceased fathers[32]—where it meant 'the cups full of *soma*, dedicated to fathers',[33] the fire of the fathers,[34] and the fathers themselves.[35] Here the concept of the praise of men grew into the praise of deceased men and the term was further transferred to the deceased men themselves and also to things and ideas associated with them.

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[21] *Vedic Index*, I, p. 224. [22] *Ibid*, s.v. Nārāśaṁsī.

[23] *Ait. Br.*, XXX, 6; see also RV, VIII, 32, 1.

[24] *Ibid*, XXXIX, 7. [25] *JAOS*, XVII, p. 65.

[26] VIII, 32, 1 explicitly states that the Kāṇvas composed *gāthās* see also VIII, 2, 38 and I, 43, 4 both these verses are from the Kāṇva hymns.

[27] IX, 99, 4; Like *Nārāśaṁsī* (Martin Haug, *Sacred Language Writings and Religion of the Pārasis*, 1907, p. 274), the word *gāthā* is Indo-Iranian (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, S.V. gāthā).

[28] IX., 86. 42; X, 64, 3. II, 34, 6; [cp. the Avestan word Nairyosaṅha] etc.

[29] *Nirukta*, viii, 6 where the views of Śākapūṇi and Kātthakya are quoted. *Bṛihaddevatā* III, 2-3; and fn. below.

[30] *Yena narāḥ praśasyante sa nārāśaṁso mantraḥ. Nirukta*, IX, 9.

[31] *Supra* fn. 1; Oldenberg H. Vedische Ultersuchungen *ZDMG*, LIV pp. 49-57. [32] *RV*, X, 57, 3; Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, II, 98 ff.

Secondly, these human eulogies were personified in the form of a fire-god named Narāśaṁsa who is described as a *kavi*[36] having a tongue of honey.[37] In this capacity, he is naturally associated with Brahmaṇaspati,[38] the god of *Brahman* or religious utterances.

Nārāśaṁsī, properly an adjective from *narāśaṁsa*, appears as a substantive once in the *Ṛigveda*, along with *gāthās* and *raibhīs* (religious songs), and means a form of composition.[39] Later, however, it was regarded as a kind of *gāthā*.

In spite of the trend towards the segregation of religious and historical traditions, *gāthās* and *nārāśaṁsīs* were assimilated and utilized in religious literature and rituals. Thus, *gāthā* along with *itihāsa* and *purāṇa* were included in the list of works for daily recitation.[40] They were sung on such occasions as weddings.[41] At the time of celebrating the horse-sacrifice, they were composed and recited for a year. On the day when the horse was let loose, it is enjoined that one Brāhmaṇa lute-player should sing three self-composed *gāthās* in praise of the royal sacrificer making special references to his liberality. On the same day, one Kshatriya lute-player was to sing three *gāthās* composed by him on the heroic achievements and martial exploits of the king.[42] For one full year the musicians sing the praise of the sacrificer, and of ancient kings and gods. Likewise on the occasion of the *sīmantonnayana* (hair-parting) ceremony, lute players were to sing the eulogies of the reigning king, valiant heroes and *soma*.[43] The *gāthās* about Janamejaya Pārikshita,[44] Marutta Aikshvāka,[45] Kraivya Pāñchāla[46]

Music & Sangeet

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[33] *Ait. Br.* II, 24. [34] Hillebrandt, op. cit. [35] *Vaj. Saṁ*, VIII, 58.

[36] *RV*, V, 5.2. [37] *Ibid*, I, 13, 3. (X, 72, 2.) [38] *Ibid*, I, 18; X, 182.

[39] X, 85, 6.

[40] *ŚB*, XI, 5, 6, 8; *Gopatha Br.*, I, 21; *Taitt. Āraṇyaka*, II, 9-11; etc.

[41] *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā*, III, 7, 3.

[42] *ŚB.*, XIII, 4, 2, 8-11; *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, XX, 2, 7-8.

[43] *Āśvalāyana Gṛihyasūtra*, I, 14, 6-7.

[44] *Ait. Br.*, VIII, 21, *SB*, XIII, 5,4,2.

[45] *Ait. Br.*, VIII, 21, *SB*, XIII, 5,4,6. [46] *ŚB*, XIII, 5, 4, 7-8.

and Bharata, the son of Duḥshyanta[47] are found in the *Brāhmaṇas*. Similarly the *Sūtras* preserve a series of ten *nārāśaṁsīs* which are to be recited in a cycle of ten days.[48]

Ākhyānas or narratives were probably already in existence in the Vedic period. According to the *Nirukta* and the *Bṛihad-devatā*, several hymns of the *Ṛigveda* allude to *ākhyānas*.[49] The *ākhyānas* of Śunaḥśepa and Purūravas seem to have been based either on the Ṛigvedic hymns[50] or on some ancient tradition which is reflected in these hymns. However it is not certain that these hymns, which are in the form of dialogues, are the fragments of dramatic *ākhyānas*. The dramatic quality of hymns is incontestible but whether they are the actual dialogues of a drama is doubtful. They may, nevertheless, indicate the existence of a semi-dramatic and semi-epic *ākhyāna* literature which, as we shall see, was the source of later historical dramas and epics.

The *Brāhmaṇa* literature refers to many *ākhyānas* such as *Devāsuraṁ* in which the war between gods and demons was narrated.[51] The *Pāriplavaṅi* consisted of a series of ten *ākhyānas* which were repeated in a cycle throughout the year when the sacrificial horse was permitted to roam at large.[52] The existence of a class of literary men who specialised in *ākhyāna* literature indicates the growth and importance of *ākhyānas*.[53] The *Nirukta* also mentions the *ākhyānas* and a group of literary men who knew them.[54]

In general, *ākhyāna* means a historical narrative. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[55] distinguishes *ākhyāna* from *itihāsa* and this distinction was maintained later in the Nirukta school. Nevertheless the *ākhyānas* were gradually assimilated in the *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition.

Writers of the Nirukta school find references to *itihāsa* even in the Ṛigvedic hymns.[56] But in any case, as a work of historical nature, *itihāsa* had come into existence by the later Vedic age, as it is mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*[57] and the *Brāhmaṇas*.[58] Derivatively it means 'verily thus it happened'. In its broader sense, which developed later, it includes all forms of historical compositions.[59] But the earlier and narrower meaning was *ancient events* (*purā-vṛitta*). The *Nirukta* implies[60] this and the *Bṛihaddevatā*[61] explicitly states it.

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[47] *Ait. Br.*, VIII, 23; *ŚB*, XIII, 5, 4, 11 ff.

[48] *Āśvalāyana Gṛihyasūtra*, I, 14, 6-7.

[49] *Supra*, p. 2 fn. 11.

[50] Winternitz: *History of Sanskrit Literature*, I, pp. 105 ff. for various theories in this connection see E. Sieg: Itihāsa in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, VII, pp. 460 ff.

[51] *ŚB*, XI, 1, 6, 9.

[52] *Ibid*, XIII, 4, 3, 15.

[53] *Ait Br.*, III, 25. 1.

[54] XI, 19.

[55] *ŚB*, XI, 1, 6, 9.

[56] *Supra* pp. 2-3.

The word *Purāṇa* is a more comprehensive term. It is properly an adjective but as a substantive it occurs as early as the *Atharvaveda* where in one passage it definitely means 'ancient lore'.[62] In the same book, it figures twice in the sense of a sacred composition, once with *ṛik*, *yajuḥ* and *sāman*[63] and again with *itihāsa*, *gāthā* and *nārāśaṁsī*.[64] As works of sacred studies, *purāṇa* and *itihāsa* occur together in the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upanishads*[65] and sometimes they are joined together in a *dvandva* compound which indicates their close association and affinity. In the *Atharvaveda*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the early *Upanishads*, they are mentioned in the singular. These stray and incidental references indicate that *itihāsa* and *purāṇa* were two allied classes of work with similar contents.

Such components of oral tradition were characterised by the fluidity of their contents, and constant revision. Sometimes the smaller units of *gāthā* and *nārāśaṁsī* were welded together, while at others they were inserted in *itihāsa* and *purāṇa*. Thus, the *ākhyāna* of Śunaḥśepa comprised as many as 100 *gāthās*.[66] The *Mahābhārata*, which is the representative work of the *itihāsa* tradition, contains many of these *gāthās* which are generally introduced with a set formula: "and thus on this topic, those who know the Purānic lore sing this *gāthā*."[67] Likewise the *Rāmāyaṇa*, another work of the *ithihāsa* group, preserves several *gāthās*.[68] Lastly the *gāthā* is one of the three constituent elements of the *Purāṇas*.[69]

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[57] XV, 6, 4.

[58] *ŚB*, XIII, 4, 3, 12, 13; XI, 5, 6, 8; 7, 9; *Jaiminīya*, 1, 53; *Gopatha*, I, 21; *Tait. Āraṇyaka*, II, 9-11; *Bṛihadāraṇyaka* II, 4, 10; IV, 1, 2; etc.

[59] *Arthaśāstra*, I, IV.

[60] X, 26. After giving mythological and metaphysical explanations on *RV*, X, 82, 2, which respectively take Viśvakarmā as a god and 'the creative and penetrating faculties of mind' Yāska proceeds to say "here they tell an *itihāsa:* Viśvakarmā, the son of Bhuvana, once performed a *sarvamedha* sacrifice. See also XII, 10.

[61] IV, 46 and Macdonell's note on it.

[62] XI, 10, 7. [63] XI, 7, 24. [64] XV, 6, 4. [65] *Supra* p. 10 fn. 7.

[66] *Ait. Br.* I, 13-18. *Śatagāthāṁ Śaunaḥśepākhyānaṁ*.

Similarly the *ākhyānas* were absorbed in *itihāsa* and *purāṇa*. The *Mahābhārata* not only contains numerous *ākhyānas*, but the work itself is described as a great *ākhyāna*.[70] That the *ākhyāna* works were sometimes inserted in the *Mahābhārata en bloc* is conclusively proved by the fact that the *Ādiparvan* contains both the parts of the *Yāyātika* with the original titles *Pūrva-yāyāta* and *Uttara-yāyāta*.[71] Likewise, Vālmīki wove the *Rāmāyaṇa* out of the material gathered from the *gāthās* and the *ākhyānas* relating the greatness of Rāma.[72] Further, the *ākhyānas* and supplementary *ākhyānas* formed two of the three constituents of the *Purāṇas*.[73] They were collated and systematised in the framework of *vaṁśa* and were utilised as *vaṁśānucharita*.

This unceasing centripetal process which seems to have started early and which worked throughout this period when the tradition had not received a fixed literary form, ultimately created the two massive traditions of *itihāsa* and *purāṇa*.

Development of Historical Tradition

Towards the concluding phase of the later Vedic period, the literature of the *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition grew considerably. That *itihāsa* and *purāṇa*, the two amorphous masses of oral tradition, crystallized into several works, is attested by the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, a later passage of which thrice mentions *itihāsa* and *purāṇa* in the plural.[74] The *vaṁśa* which became a characteristic feature of the *Purāṇas*, developed during this period[75] and its inclusion in the *Purāṇas* considerably swelled them. The Bharata saga and probably the *gāthās* which celebrated the glorious deeds of *Aikshvāku* Rāma also came into existence.[76] The grammatical tradition vouches for the luxuriant growth of *ākhyāna* works. It not only mentions this literary genre but also names specific works of this category.

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[67] I, 121, 13; VII, 67, 14 etc. [68] See *infra* p. 32.
[69] *Vishṇu*, III, 6.15. [70] I, 1, 16. (B.O.R.I, Edition).
[71] See V.S. Agrawal, *Pāṇini*, (Hindi edition). Benares, V.S. 2012, pp. 231-32.
[72] See *infra* pp. 13f. [73] *Vishṇu*, III, 6.15.
[74] II, 9; 10; 11. [75] See *infra*, p. 26. [76] See *infra*, p. 21.

Kātyāyana refers to the *Daivāsuraṁ*[77] which is evidently identical with the *Devāsurākhyāna* of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. Patañjali names three *ākhyānas*—the *Yāvakṛītika*, the *Praiyaṅgavika* and the *Yāyātika*.[78] .Elsewhere he says that the work embodying the *ākhyāna* of Yayāti was divided into two parts called *Pūrvayāyāta* and *Uttarayāyāta*.[79]

Lastly, *ākhyāyikā*, a form associated with *ākhyāna*, assumed its literary shape during this period. The earliest reference to the word *ākhyāyikā* is in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* where it denotes a story illustrating some moral precept.[80] The Vṛittikāra used it in the same sense when he stated that some passages in the *Brāhmaṇas* are anecdotal (*ākhyāyikāsvarūpa*).[81] But Kātyāyana takes it as a form of historical composition allied to *ākhyāna*, *itihāsa* and *purāṇa*. Patañjali gives the names of three *ākhyāyikās*—the *Vāsavadattā*, the *Sumanottarā* and the *Bhaimarathī*.[82] *Akhyāyikā* was always considered a form of historical composition.[83]

This efflorescence of the historical tradition was due to the growing influence of the Bhṛigvāṅgirases over it.

The Bhṛigvāṅgirases and the Historical Tradition

In the *Ṛigveda*, the priest-poet is variously mentioned as *kāru* and *kīrin* from √kṛi to commemorate, *kavi* from √ku to speak, and ṛishi from √ṛish to flow or utter streams of songs. The kāru was a professional man.[84] He was attached to the royal household and lived amongst the retainers.[85] During this period, poetry was especially associated with the priestly class,[86] although persons in aristocratic circles may also have shown their poetic talents.

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[77] Vārttika on the *Ashṭādhyāyī*, IV, 3,88.

[78] IV, 2,60. [79] On VI, 2,103. [80] I,6. [81] IV, 2,60.

[82] The *Arthaśāstra* (I,IV) regards *ākhyāyikā* as a constituent part of *itihāsa*. Bāṇa (*Kādambarī*, Pūrvabhāga, N. S. P., p. 7) classed *ākhyāyikā* with *ākhyānaka*, *itihāsa* and *purāṇa*. The writers on *Sāhitya-śāstra* maintained that the subject matter of *ākhyāyikā* should be the actual events.

[83] See *infra*, pp. 57 ff. Winternitz (*JRAS*, 1903, 57), thinks that the verse of the *Mahābhārata* (II, ii, 38) which refers to *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā* is a later interpolation. But see the *Rāmāyaṇa*, I.87.

[84] IX, 112,3. *Vedic Index*, I. 150. [85] *Vedic Index, loc. cit.*

[86] Geldner: *Vedische Studien*, II, p. 153.

Usually the royal priest was also the poet-laureate. On various occasions he had to compose eulogies for his royal patron.[87]

Broadly speaking, there were three main clans of priests in the Vedic age. The Vasishṭhas and the Viśvāmitras were the priests of the Bharata kings.[88] The Kāṇvas were associated with the Yadus,[89] Parāśavas[90] and Purus.[91] Bhāradvāja was the priest of Divodāsa[92] but later the Bhāradvājas were connected with the Sṛiñjayas,[93] the allies of the Bharatas. Amongst minor lines, the Kavashas appear as priests of the Kurus,[94] whereas the Bhṛigus are mentioned along with the Druhyus and were probably the priests of the Mānavas.[95]

The earlier stage of the historical tradition of the Bharatas was developed under Bhāradvāja[96] and Viśvāmitra.[97] Later, however, the family of Vasishtḥa exercised a dominating influence over it to the exclusion of the descendants of Viśvāmitra, who might have had some connections with the dynasty. In several hymns, Vasishtḥa celebrated the heroic deeds of Sudās.[98] Parāśara and Satayātu of this family of Vasishṭha were also associated with the Bharata king.[99] The former was either a son or more probably a grand-son while the latter was perhaps a brother of Vasishṭha.[100]

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[87] "Wo es anging, war der Purohita eines Fürston wohl zugleich sein Hofpoet, der nicht allein als Barde in den mehr weltichen *gāthāḥ* und *nārāśanisyaḥ* den Ruhm und die Freigebigkeit seines Herrn besang, sondern auch sein geistlicher dichter war, als purohita des kulhis, als Brahman auf Wunsch und Bestellung des Königlichen Yajamāna für die Opferfeier ein neues Sūktam zu liefern hatte." Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, II. pp. 153-154.

[88] See *infra* pp. 16 ff. [89] *RV*, VIII, 4, 7.

[90] *RV*, VIII, 6. [91] *RV*, VIII, 19, 36.

[92] *Pañchaviṁśa Br.*, XV, 3, 7; see also *Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā*, XXI, 10, where Bhāradvāja is said to have given Pratardana the kingdom *RV*, VI, 47, 24; the *Bṛihaddevatā*, V, 124, ff.

[93] *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, XVI, II, II, see also *infra*, p. 17 fnn. 3-5.

[94] See A. D. Pusalkar, Kuru Sravaṇa in *Studies in Epics and Purāṇas in India*, 1955, B.V.B. Bombay.

[95] *RV*, VIII, 3, 9; 6, 18; 102, 4; for the mānavas: "With this great anointing of Indra, Chyavana Bhārgava anointed Śaryāta Mānava" *Ait. Br.*, VIII, 21-22.

[96] The *Pañchaviṁśa Br.*, XV, 3, 7; *RV*, I, 116, 8; VI, 16, 5. *Bharadvājāya griṇate*. VI, 31, 4. See also *Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā*, XXI, 10.

[97] *RV*, III, 33. [98] *RV*, VII, 18. [99] *RV*, VII, 18, 21.

[100] *Nirukta* VI, 30; Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, 2, 132.

Śakti the son of Vasishṭha, is mentioned in later Vedic literature.[101] The name of Vyāsa, the descendant of Parāśara occurs in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*[102] and the *Sāmavidhāna Brāhmaṇa*.[103] Up to Parāśara, the connection of the Vāsishṭhas with the Bharata family is beyond any doubt. In the tradition Vyāsa, the descendant of Parāśara, is credited with the systematisation of the Bharata saga. As observed earlier, royal eulogies were not generally incorporated in the *Ṛigveda*. They existed as a floating mass of literature and gave rise to the Bharata saga to which Vyāsa seems to have given a literary garb. However, after the merging of the Bharatas and the Kuru-Pāñchālas, the influence of the Vāsishṭhas naturally declined and ultimately their hold on historical traditions passed on to other families of priests.

Bharadvāja was the priest of Divodāsa of the Bharata family. But at the time of Sudās the Bhāradvājas were connected not with the Bharatas, but with their allies, the Srīñjayas. Pāyu Bhāradvāja had Aśvattha Sṛiñjaya as his patron.[104] In the *Bṛihad-devatā*, he is credited with assisting Prastoka, another king of the same family.[105] The Kāṇva was also an important priestly family. Vatsa Kāṇva celebrates in a hymn Tirindira of the Parśu family.[106] The tradition also supports this association as the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* mentions Vatsa as the priest of the Pāraśava king Tirindira.[107] He was also connected with the Puru king Trasadasyu,[108] and with the Yadus, and Turvaśas.[109] Śobhari, another member of the family, received the royal patronage of Trasadasyu, the son of Purukutsa.[110]

The later strata of the *Ṛigveda* clearly indicate the growing influence of the Kāṇvas over historical traditions. The eighth book ascribed to them is characterized by rare metres like *pragātha* and unusual contents—the majority of the *dānastutis* are in it. As we have seen, the Kāṇvas were especially connected with the *gāthās*.

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[101] *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*, II, 390 (*JAOS*. XVIII, 47).

[102] I, 9, 2. [103] III, 9, 8. [104] *RV*, VI, 47, 24.

[105] V, 124 ff. See also the battle hymn, *RV*, VI, 75.

[106] *RV*, VIII, 46. [107] XVI, 32, 20.

[108] *RV*, VII, 8, 8 and 21. [109] *RV*, VIII, 6, 46; VIII, 9, 14.

[110] *RV*, VIII, 9, 36.

Later traditions group these families under the Āṅgirases[111] and this is supported by several references to the Āṅgirases in the Ṛigvedic hymns composed by the Kāṇvas and the Bhāradvājas.[112] Undoubtedly, the Bhṛigus are associated with this priestly culture-complex.

In the later Vedic age, the families of the Āṅgirasas, the Ātharvaṇas and the Bhṛigus merged to form a powerful Bhṛigvāṅgiras group. The fusion of these three families was an event of considerable importance to Indian historiography. The process of integration had started in the Vedic age. The three families are mentioned together in the *Ṛigveda*[113] or the Bhṛigus are mentioned along with either the Atharvans[114] or the Āṅgirases.[115] Further, the *Atharvaveda* is called alternatively the text of the Atharvāṅgirases and that of the Bhṛigvāṅgirases.[116] "This inter-relation of three names continues in the *Yajus* and the *Brāhmaṇa* texts, but in such a way that the juxtaposition of Bhṛigu and Āṅgiras becomes exceedingly frequent broaching in fact complete synonymy. The latter is reached in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* where the sage Chyavana is designated either as a Bhārgava or as an Āṅgirasa."[117] Similarly Dadhyañcha is sometimes called Atharvan and at others Āṅgirasa.[118] Further evidence for the fusion of three families is found in the *Mahābhārata*.[119]

This composite family is very intimately connected with the *itihāsa purāṇa* tradition. According to the *Chhāndogya Upanishad*, the *Atharvaveda*, a text of this family, stands in the same relation to the *itihāsa-purāṇa*, as the *ṛik* to the *Ṛigveda*, the *yajus* to the *Yajurveda* and the *sāman* to the *Sāmaveda*.[120] More explicitly, the same work adds, "the Atharvāṅgirases are the bees, the *itihāsa-purāṇa* is the flower".[121]

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[111] *Vāyu P.*, II, 4,97-98; 106.

[112] *RV*, I, 45 which is a *sūkta* of the kāṇva family (see V. 5) mentions Āṅgirasa, in the verse 3. See also *RV*, VI, 2,10; 16,11.

[113] X, 14,6. [114] X, 92, 10. [115] VIII, 43, 13.

[116] The *Bhṛigvāṅgirasaḥ* as the name of the *Atharvaveda* occurs in the *Vaitāna Sūtra*, 1.5; *Gopatha Br.*, I, 1, 39; 2,18; III, 1.2, 4 etc. the general term is the *Atharvāṅgirasaḥ*.

[117] M. Bloomfield: *The Hymns of the Atharvaveda*, SBE, XLIII, p. xxvii.

[118] *Tait Saṁ*, V, 1,4,4; *Pañchaviṁśa Br.*, XII, 8.6.

[119] "The Authorship of the *Mahābhārata*, *ABORI*, XXIV, pp. 71 ff.

[120] *Chh. Up.*, III, 3, 4.

The *Mahābhārata*, which developed out of the Bharata saga, is definitely the work of the Bhṛigvāṅgirases. After analysing the Bhārgava legends, in the *Mahābhārata*, Sukthankar concludes, "In the first place, we have very definite evidence of the fact that our epic (*scil.* the *Mahābhārata*) has been consciously and deliberately expanded at least in one instance: the surreptitious addition of a branch of Bhārgava legends to the Kuru-Pāṇḍava epic in the shape of the so-called Paulomaparvan in the *Ādi* which is evidently made up of Bhārgava legends and has not even the remotest intrinsic connection with the story of the epic. Then . . . tendentious "Bhṛiguization" of older legends. And, last but not the least, we must take account of the very important fact that the *kulapati* Śaunaka himself, before whom the *Mahābhārata* is stated to have been recited by the Sūta Ugraśravas was also a Bhārgava ! . . There should be therefore, in my opinion, no hesitation in concluding that in our version of the *Mahābhārata*, there is a conscious—nay deliberate—weaving together or rather stitching together of the Bhārata legends with the Bhārgava myths."[122]

Equally clear is the evidence for the fact that the tradition of the *Rāmāyaṇa* was developed by the Bhṛigvāṅgirases. The *Harivaṁśa* states that the *paurāṇikas* sang the *gāthās* celebrating the greatness of Rāma.[123] The *Śāntiparvan* further adds that the *gāthās* were developed into an *ākhyāna* by the Bhārgavas.[124] The internal evidence of the *Rāmāyaṇa* indicates that its nucleus was formed by an *ākhyāna* of the Aikshvaku family.[125] Vālmīki, who wove the epic out of it, was a Bhārgava—the descendant of Chyavana.[126] The members of the Bhṛigvāṅgiras family play an important role in the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Legends about Bhāradvāja Āṅgirasa, Saṁvartta, Chyavana, Uśanas, Jamadagni and others are narrated at several places in the epic.[127] This leaves but little doubt that the Bhṛigvāṅgirases developed the saga of Rāma, composed the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and introduced their own legends in it.

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[121] *Ibid*, III, 4.1 See also III, 4.2 "Those very hymns of the Atharvāṅgirasas brooded over the *Itihāsa-purāṇa*".

[122] The Bhṛigus and the Bhārata; A Text-historical Study, *Critical Studies in the Mahābhārata*, (V.S. Sukthankar Memorial Edition) p. 280.

[123] XLI, 49. [124] LVI, 40. [125] I, 5, 3.

[126] His Bhārgava lineage is mentioned in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, VII, 94, 26. The *Buddhacharita*, I, 43, *Śāntiparvan*, 56, 40, *Matsya Purāṇa*, XII, 51.

The contribution of the Bhṛigvāṅgirases to the development of the Puranic lore is considerable. Besides an enormous mass of the Bhārgava legends scattered in various *Purāṇas*, the tradition of the Puranic transmission indicates the vital role which they played in the growth and propagation of Puranic literature. According to the *Vishṇu*, the *Purāṇa* was originally composed by the Ṛishi and was transmitted to Parāśara through Ṛibhu, Priyavrata, Bhāguri and the Bhārgava sages such as Dadhīchi, Sārasvata, Bhṛigu, Vatsa and others.[128] The *Mārkaṇḍeya* is reported to have been learnt originally by Chyavana, the Bhārgava, who declared to Daksha, from whom Mārkaṇḍeya the Bhārgava learnt it.[129]

Not only the *itihāsas* and the *purāṇas*, but other historical compositions—the *ākhyāna* and the *ākhyāyikā*—also bear the impress of the Bhṛigvāṅgirases. The *Mahābhāshya* and the *Kāśikā* speak of an *ākhyāna* on Bhārgava Rāma, the favourite hero of the Bhṛigvāṅgirases.[130] Early *ākhyāyikās* are unfortunately lost to us, and not much is known about them from incidental references in other works. But if, in their absence, the evidence of the *Harshacharita*, the earliest known example of *ākhyāyikā*, is taken into consideration, it will demonstrate in very clear terms the influence of the Bhārgavas on this historical genre.[131]

These different lines of evidence will indicate the amazing hold of the Bhṛigvāṅgirases over historical traditions, at least from the later Vedic period.

The Sūtas and the Vaṁśa Literature

Besides the Bhṛigvāṅgirases, the institution of the *Sūtas* was another factor in the development of the historical traditions. The word *sūta* occurs in the *Yajurveda*,[132] the *Atharvaveda*,[133] the *Saṁhitās*[134] and the *Brāhmaṇas*.[135] The *Yajurveda* associates him with song,[136] and the *Brāhmaṇas* declare him to be inviolate.[137] In the former, the *sūta* appears in collocation with the *Māgadha*.[138] All these facts indicate that, in the later Vedic period, the word *sūta* meant a minstrel or a bard.[139]

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[127] N. J. Shende: The Authorship of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *JUB*, XII, pt. II, pp. 19 ff.

[128] VI, 8,43-49; Wilson: *Collected Works*, Vol. V, 250-51.

[129] XLIV, 20-25 (Bibliothica Indica Series) C. 1862.

[130] On the *Ashṭādhyāyī*, VI, 2, 103; for the *Kāśikā*, Ed. by Bāl Sastri, 1898, Benares, p. 561.

[131] See *infra* pp. 51-58; 59-60.

The word *Sūta* is of doubtful origin. Scholars connect it with √su to consecrate.[140] But it might have been derived from √su to impel.[141] According to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the king in the course of the Rājasūya sacrifice "goes to the house of the *Sūta*, and prepares a barley pap for Varuṇa; for *Sūta* is the impellent of gods; therefore it is for Varuṇa".[142] The way in which the *Sūta* impelled kings may be known from a significant passage of the *Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā:*

"By (the celebration) of the midday pressing and with the power endowed to him by Marut, Indra killed Vṛitra . . It (*scil.* the Marutvatīya verse) strengthens the sacrificer and kills Vṛitra . . With the first *Marutvatīya*, he (the sacrificer or Indra) raises the thunderbolt, with the second he hurls and with the third he lays (the enemy) low . . Wishing to kill Vṛitra, Indra gave gifts to the gods [so that they might come with full vigour for his assistance]. He killed Vṛitra with (the help of the gods and) the *marutvatīya* hymns . . Therefore the king wins the battle with (the help of) the threefold (recitation) of the Gāyatrī by the *Sūtas* and the *grāmaṇīs*."[143]

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[132] XXX, 6. [133] III, 5, 7.

[134] *Tait. Saṁ*, I, 8, 9, 1. *Maitrā Saṁ* (Rājasūya) II,6,5,1. *Kāthaka Saṁ*, XV, 4; XVII, 12, XXVIII, 3.

[135] *Tait. Br.*, I, 7, 3, 19. *ŚB.*, V, 3, 1, 5; 4, 4, 17-18.

[136] The text as given in Weber's edition is "*nṛittāya Sūtani, gītāya śailūshāni*" but the *Taitt. Br.*, III,4,2,1 quotes it as "*gītāya Sūtani nṛittāya Śailūshāni.*" The second reading is correct as in the Sanskrit literature, *Śailūsha* (a dancer) is always associated with dancing and never with singing.

[137] *Sūtayāhantvāya*, *Kāṭhaka*, XVII, 12.

[138] XXX, 5-7. [139] *Vedic Index*, II, p. 462.

[140] Weber: *Indische Studien*, 17, 200; *Vedic Index*, II, p. 463.

[141] Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration*, p. 72.

[142] *ŚB*, V, 3,1,5.

[143] *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*, XXVIII, 3.

The passage indicates firstly that the *sūtas* and the *grāmaṇīs* used to recite the Gāyatrī and other verses and secondly that their recitation was supposed to have the effect of giving energy to the king and thus impelling him to defeat his enemies. However at an earlier time this function was discharged by priests. Explaining the significance of an unusual hymn in the *Ṛigveda,*[144] the *Bṛihaddevatā*[145] narrates a story. Asked by his father, Pāyu Bhāradvāja consecrated the kings Prastoka Sṛiñjaya and Abhyāvarti Chāyamāna by the hymn in question, with the result that they scored a victory over their adversaries. Thus the evidence of the *Kāṭhaka-Saṁhitā* is important as it evinces the process through which a branch of the priestly class crystallized into the group of the *Sūtas*. This close association of the *Sūtas* and the priestly class is further indicated by a late but safe tradition. The *Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* mentions *Sūta*[146] and *Sauti*[147] as *gotras* respectively under the Bhāradvājas of the Āṅgirasa group and under the Kaśyapas. Āpastamba likewise lists *Sūta*[148] under the kevalāṅgirasa group. Further in the tradition *Sūta* is described as a Brāhmaṇa[149] and as a venerable sage, well-versed in the Vedic lore.

The *Sūta* was one of the most important court-officials in the later Vedic age. He was one of the eight *vīras.*[150] As a *ratnin*, he could exert much influence in the kingdom.[151] The ceremony of "passing down the sword" indicates that in rank he was immediately below the priest and the members of the royal[152] family. Like *grāmaṇī*, *Sūta* was merely a functional designation and did not denote caste.

The *Yajurveda* associates the *Sūtas* with songs, which in the light of the close connection of *Sūtas* and kings, are to be interpreted as songs celebrating kings. The *Ṛigveda* contains some such songs—the *gāthās* a variety of which was called *anuvaṁśyā* in the *Mahābhārata*[153] as it gives a genealogy. In the tradition the *Sūtas* are credited with the composition and preservation of royal genealogy and the line of priestly succession (*vaṁśa*).[154] The *vaṁśa* literature dealing with priests had come into existence in the later Vedic period. The *Vaṁśa-Brāhmaṇa* belonging to the *Sāmaveda* gives the succession of teachers from Kaśyapa to Vaiśrava.[155] The *Jaimini-Upanishad-Brāhmaṇa*,[156] the *Śatapatha*[157] and the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*[158] contain various lists of sages arranged in order of succession which in the texts are specifically termed *vaṁśa*. Now, the existence of the priestly *vaṁśa* in the sacerdotal literature, the references to the *Sūtas*, who in the tradition are credited with the preservation of royal and priestly genealogies, coupled with the facts that there existed a category of historical composition known as the *Purāṇas*, and that the royal genealogies of very early times are preserved—though not accurately—in the Puranic tradition, create very strong grounds for supposing that the royal genealogies also existed during this period.

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[144] VIII, 75. [145] V, 124-138.

[146] Brough, J. The *Gotra Pravara Mañjarī*, Cambridge, 1953, p. 113.

[147] *Ibid*, p. 162. [148] *Ibid*, p. 130.

[149] *Vāyu Purāṇa*, I, 33-38. Pusalkar: The Brāhmana and the Kshatriya Tradition, *Prof. Hiriyinna Commemoration Volume*, Mysore, 1952, pp. 151-52; Diskalkar, *IHQ*, VIII, 760.

[150] *Pañchaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa*, IX, 1,4.

[151] *AV*, III, 5,7; *Tait. Br.*, IV, 5,2,1 etc.

[152] *ŚB*, V, 4,4,17-18.

The *Sūtas*, who were royal officers mostly drawn from the Bhṛigvāṅgiras families, composed the *vaṁśas* of various dynasties. Handled by the Bhṛigvāṅgirases and other members of the Brāhmaṇa caste, the *vaṁśa* became a representative form of historical composition. The stray historical works which were collated and systematised within the framework of *vaṁśa* constituted the category of *vaṁśānucharita*. The ancient lore with different branches of cosmogony, combined, with the *vaṁśa* and the *vaṁśānucharita* constituted the five characteristic features (*lakshaṇas*) of the Puraṇic lore.

The experts on genealogical literature continued to write *vaṁśas* up to the fourth century A.D. when, for reasons explained later, the composition of *vaṁśas* in the *Purāṇas* suddenly stopped although the Puranic lore continued to grow.

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[153] III, 88, 5.

[154] *Vāyupurāṇa*, I, 31-32; *Padma Purāṇa*, V, 1, 27-28; see also Pargiter *AHT*, p. 15.

[155] Max Müller, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 233-234.

[156] III, 40-42 and IV, 16-17. [157] X, 6,5,9. [158] IV, 3,14.

Historical Tradition Standardised

[400 B.C.—400 A.D.]

This oral tradition, which flourished from the early Vedic age as a floating mass of experiences, history and legends, and which began to become formalised in the concluding phase of the later Vedic age, assumed a fixed literary form between 400 B.C. and 400 A.D. One of the factors which contributed to the standardisation of this tradition was the impact of the Śaka Volkerwanderung. Toynbee is, therefore, only partially correct. "When a demand for 'heroic poetry' arises among barbarian conquerors who settle down to live off their conquests as a ruling caste" he states, "this demand can be satisfied in either one of two alternative ways. Either the barbarians can produce minstrels of their own to celebrate their own deeds in their own languages, or they call upon the subject population to supply them the spiritual commodity of 'heroic poetry'. . . . When the Śakas felt a need for heroic poetry they addressed themselves to the Indic people."[159] But the major reasons for such developments in India were the decline of ritualistic tradition, and the rise of unorthodox royal families of the Nandas and the Mauryas, followed by the upsurge of the Āgamic sects and the new orthodox powers of the Sātavāhanas, the Śuṅgas and the Kāṇvas. In the beginning, forces of reformation pushed the ritualistic tradition in the background but later a movement of counter-reformation brought back the old religion in considerably modified form. The *itihāsa* tradition which comprised the second order of religious literature, therefore, came to the forefront. Thus under the religious urge, the *itihāsa-purāṇa* literature was given the fixed literary form. Religion standardised the *itihāsa* tradition but it also destroyed the historical character of the tradition by inundating it with the accounts of practices and philosophies of various cults.

Traditions of Vaṁśa

The *vaṁśa* literature however did not cease to exist. Besides giving rise to a simple oral tradition of bards, through adaptations and embellishments it assumed four forms. The Buddhist tradition of *vaṁśa* which started a few centuries before the Christian era, and in which the Rājavaṁśa of the *Mahāvastu*[160] and the Buddhavaṁśa of the *Suttapiṭaka*[161] were composed, continued through the *Siṁhala-aṭṭhakathā*, the *Dīpavaṁśa*, the *Mahāvaṁśa*[162] and other similar works. To popularise their religion, the Jainas also adopted the tradition. The *Harivaṁśa*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and other historical and quasi-historical works of *itihāsa* traditions were written in a Jaina frame-work.[163] The third tradition was developed in the royal secretariat and court. At least from Mauryan times, royal archives were organised and maintained. Besides several other documents, the archives kept the records of "the history of customs, professions, and transactions of countries, villages, families and corporations; the gains in the form of gifts to the king's courtiers ... the gains of the wives and sons of the king" and above all of "the treaties with, issues of ultimatum to, and payments of tribute from or to, friendly or inimical kings."[164] Hiuen Tsang also notes, "As to their archives and records there are separate custodians of these. The official annals and state-papers are called collectively *ni-lo-pi-tu* (or ch'a); in these good and bad are recorded, and instances of public calamity and good fortune are set forth in detail."[165] Alberuni probably refers to the archives of the Sāhī kings of Kabul when he notes a tradition that "the pedigree of this royal family, written in silk, exists in the fortress of Nagarkot."[166] Further, there are quite a few incidental references to the *vaṁśa* in the injunctions of the *Dharmaśāstra* writers regarding the drafting of royal edicts. Kauṭilya in the chapter on the royal charters enjoins on the writer of records to mention the name, *vaṁśa* and titles of the king who issues the edict.[167] Yājñavalkya says, "while executing a deed of land-grant, the king should issue a permanent edict bearing his signature, name and *vaṁśya*[168] (ancestors)." According to Bṛihaspati and Vyāsa, the royal genealogy (termed respectively *vaṁśa* and *vaṁśānupūrvī*) should be recorded in the charter of a land-grant.[169] Probably because of their containing this royal genealogy, inscriptions are sometimes called *pūrvā*[170] (past history). These injunctions necessarily indicate the existence of royal genealogy in state archives.

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[159] *Study of History* Vol. V, Annex II to V.C. (i) (C) 3, p. 605.

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[160] E. Senart, *Le Mahāvastu*, Paris, 1882, pp. 338-355. Tr. by I. J. Jones, M.A., London, 1949, Vol. I, pp. 285 ff.

[161] *The Minor Anthologies of the Pāli Canon*, SBE, IX.

[162] *The Dīpavaṁśa and Mahāvaṁśa and Their Historical Development in Ceylon*, by Wilhelm Geiger, Tr. by E. M. Coomaraswamy, Colombo, 1908. Also, A. K. Warder: The Pali Canon and Its Commentary as an Historical Record, *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, London, 1961, pp. 44-56; and L.S. Perara, The Pali Chronicle of Ceylon, in the same book pp. 29-32.

[163] Winternitz, M., *History of Indian Literature*, Calcutta, 1933, II, 486-88. For example see Ravisheṇa, *Padmapurāṇa*, Banaras, 1958, I, 51. *Ikshvākuprabhṛitīnāṁcha vaṁśānāṁ guṇa-kīrtanaṁ*, and also Chapter V.

[164] *Arthaśāstra*, II, 25. Tr. by R. Shamsastri, Banglore, 1915.

[165] Yuan Chwāng's Travels in India. Ed. by T. Watters, London, 1904 Vol. I, p. 154. See also Samuel Beal, Siyuki, London, N., p. 178.

[166] Edward C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, London, 1888, Vol. II, pp. 10-11.

But these archival records have not come down to us in original and complete form. The *vaṁśāvalīs* preserved in some outlying provinces may be regarded as greatly modified versions of the *vaṁśa* lore.[171] Royal epigraphs on the other hand represent it in fragmentary and sometimes in condensed form.

Besides throwing several offshoots in India, Ceylon and Burma, and in royal courts, monasteries and temples, the *vaṁśa* mainly branched off into classical literature and developed under the influence of Clio and Caliope. In integral form it blossomed into full *vaṁśa* works—the *Raghuvaṁśa* and the *Harivaṁśa* being the earliest available specimens in classical Sanskrit literature. The *Aśmakavaṁśa*[172] is now lost as also the *Śaśivaṁśa*[173] and the *Nṛipāvalī*[174] of Kshemendra, the *Pārthivāvalī*[175] of Helarāja, the eleven *rājakathās*[176] (royal chronicles) mentioned by Kalhaṇa, and the *Gauḍorvīrśa-kula-praśasti* of Harsha.[177] Fortunately, the *Mūshikavaṁśa* of Atula[178] and the *Rāshtrauḍhavaṁśa* of Rudra[179] have been preserved. The *Rājataraṅgiṇīs* of Kalhaṇa and his successors also belong to this class.

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[167] L, 28, (Trivendrum) p. 168. [168] *Āchāra*, 318-320.

[169] *Bṛihaspati Smṛiti*, GOS, Baroda, p. 62.

[170] B. Ch. Chhabra, *Pūrvā* meaning *Praśasti*, *Sarūpa-bhāratī*, Hoshiarpur, V.V.R.I., 1954, pp. 14-24.

[171] For example *Nepāla-Vaṁśāvalī*, analysis of which may be seen in Luciana Petech, *Mediaeval History of Nepal*, Roma, 1958, pp. 5 ff; *JBORS*, *XXVIII*, 1942, 24-42.

[172] This work is mentioned by Bhāmaha in his *Kāvyālaṅkāra*, I, 34.

[173] The *Kavikaṇṭhābharaṇa* of Kshemendra preserves several verses from this work. See illustrations of '*samastāsaktā-vyāpi*', and *prakhyātavṛittigato* in *sarga* 3, and '*arthavaimalya*' and '*deśaparichaya*' in *sarga*, IV.

[174] *Rājataraṅgiṇi*, I, 13. [175] *Ibid*, I, 17. [176] *Ibid*, I, 14.

Another current of this epic tradition of *vaṁśa* divided itself into various streamlets forming different categories of ornate epics—the *charita* and others.

The Rise of Historical Narratives

The second stage of historical tradition, developed in the milieu of royal courts, is represented by historical epics, generally called *charitas* or biographies, composed in the early Mediaeval period. The history of biographical writing in India may be traced to the *Buddhacharita* and further to the *Rāmāyaṇa*[180] and the *ākhyānas* of the Vedic literature. But never before the early Mediaeval age, were attempts made at the writing of the biographies of intimately known contemporary kings. It seems that Bāṇabhaṭṭa in the first quarter of the 7th century initiated the series of such biographies by writing the *Harshacharita*. If earlier texts of this kind existed, we have no evidence of them.

The transformation of the historical tradition of *itihāsa* and *purāṇa* in these royal biographies is largely due to the change in the position of the Bhṛigvāṅgirases. In the early Mediaeval age when the heroic tradition of history changed into the courtly one, the wandering *Sūtas* and the Bhṛigvāṅgirases were replaced by salaried court poets and *sāṅdhivigrahikas* who were either themselves Bhṛigvāṅgirases or were closely associated with them.

The Bhṛigvāṅgirases received royal patronage in various kingdoms much before the beginning of the early Mediaeval age. In eastern and central India, they obtained *śasanas* from Bhūluṇḍa, the king of Valkha in Khandesh[181] (A.D. 357), Subandhu, the king of Mahishmatī (A.D. 417),[182] Vyāghrasena, the Traikūṭaka king[183] (A.D. 490), Dadda II, the Gurjjara king,[184] and numerous other rulers in these regions.[185] The donees of the Madhuban[186] and Banskhera[187] plates of Harsha were also the Bhārgava and Āṅgīrasa Brāhmaṇas.

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[177] The name of this work is mentioned in the *Naishadhīyacharita*, VII, 110, see also A.N. Jani, *A Critical Study of Śrīharsha*, Baroda, 1957, 110-11; *IA*, *XLII*, 83-84.

[178] *Travancore Archaeological Series*, II, 87-113.

[179] Edited by E. Kṛishṇamāchārya, G.O.S., Baroda, 1917.

[180] In *Rāmāyaṇa* I, 31 Brahmā requests Vālmīki: *Rāmasya charitaṁ kṛitsnaiṁ kuru ṛishi-sattama.* See also *Rāmāyaṇa* IV. 1.

[181] Indora Plate of Bhuluṇḍa, *CII*, IV, p. 9.

Gradually the influence of these Brāhmaṇas increased. Under Yuvarājadeva I, the Kalachurī king of Tripurī, Bhāk Miśra, an Āṅgirasa Brāhmaṇa of the Bhāradvāja *gotra*, wielded unusual influence on the Chedi kingdom and administration. He was the Prime Minister of the Kalachuri king.[188] In the *Viddhaśālabhañjikā*, Rājaśekhara represented this remarkable personality as Bhāgurāyaṇa, the counsellor of the royal hero Karpūravarsha, to be identified with Yuvarājadeva Keyūravarsha.[189] It is stated in the Kāritalai inscription that Bhāk Miśra was venerated by kings, and that guided by him Yuvarājadeva I attained prosperity.[190] Someśvara, the son of Bhāk Miśra was held by Lakshmaṇarāja II in even higher esteem. That he enjoyed rare distinction and unique honour is known from the fact that the king Lakshmaṇarāja II deemed it as his privilege "to put his shoulder to the palanquin of Someśvara when one of the bearers stumbled through fatigue".[191]

Nāmadeva, a Brāhmaṇa of the Bhāradvāja *gotra*, was the family priest of Jājalladeva II, the Kalachuri king of Kośala, and is celebrated in the Amoda plates.[192] The feet of Dāmodara, the Bhārgava Brāhmaṇa of the Sāvarṇi *gotra*, were worshipped by kings.[193] An ancient stone image of this celebrity has been discovered by Dr. Hiralal[194] and this fact bears witness to the great influence which he wielded in Mahākośala.

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[182] Barwani Plate of Subandhu, *ibid*, p. 18.

[183] Surat Plates of Vyāghrasena, *ibid*, p. 27.

[184] Kaira Plates of Dadda II, Year 385, *ibid*, p. 70. Sankheda Plates of Dadda II, *ibid*, p. 77.

[185] Bagumra Plates of Allaśakti, *ibid*, p. 119. Nasik Plates of Dharāśraya-Jayasiṁha, *ibid*, p. 130.

[186] *EI*, I, p. 73 (Sāvarṇi-Bhārgava).

[187] *Ibid*, IV, p. 211 (a Bharadvāja Brāhmaṇa)

[188] Karitalai Stone Ins. of Lakshmaṇarāja II, v. 6, *CII*, IV, p. 189.

[189] *CII*, IV, Introduction, LXXXI.

[190] Verse, 6.

[191] *Verse*, v. 17.

[192] *CII*, IV, p. 531.

[193] *Ibid*, p. 531, verse 14.

[194] *Ibid*, p. 529.

Bhaṭṭa Yaśodhara, an Āṅgirasa Brāhmaṇa of the Bhāradvāja *gotra* from the famous settlement of Ṭakārī, was in the charge of justice in the Chandella administration and was probably the royal priest under Dhaṅga.[195]

Another personage from the Āṅgirasa settlement of Ṭakārī, was Sādhāraṇa, the minister of Mahāśivagupta II Janamejaya. He is described as having pleased his royal master by reciting various *ākhyānakas.*[196]

Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, the Sāndhivigrahika under Harivarman, the king of Eastern Bengal, was a Bhārgava of the Sāvarṇi *gotra.*[197] His ancestors obtained a *śāsana* from an unnamed king of Gauḍa.[198] His grandfather Arideva served as a *sāndhivigrahika* in Vaṅga.[199] That the Brāhmaṇas of this group continued to enjoy royal patronage under Bhojavarman, is known from the Belwa plates.[200] Another famous writer of Bengal, Halāyudha, belonged to the Vatsa *gotra* of the Bhārgavas. In his early years, he was a *rāja-paṇḍita*, in youth a *mahāmātya* under Lakshmaṇasena, and in mature years a *dharmādhikārī.*[201]

The influence of the Bhṛigvāṅgirases on the Chāhamāna territory is evidenced by the *Lalitavigraharāja*[202] of Someśvara. With ardent admiration and profound respect, the poet introduced in his play the traveller Śubhānanda. The king Vigraharāja IV "deemed the sight of such a scholar as the fruition of his accumulated merits".[203] We are told that Śubhānanda hailed from Ṭakārī, a peerless abode of the Brāhmaṇas versed in all branches of learning, and a place visited by scholars from far and wide. It was this settlement where scholars used to tell stories which perforce brought tears to eyes".[204]

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[195] Khajuraho ins. No. 4, verse 56, *EI*, I, p. 146. As a Brāhmaṇa donee from Dhakāri (mistake for Ṭakārī), Yośodhara figures in the Nanyaura Plate of Dhaṅga, *IA*, XVI, p. 204.

[196] *EI*, III, p. 349, LL. 37-42; *ibid*, VIII, p. 143; *ibid*, XXIII, p. 253, LL. 46-48 and p. 249.

[197] Bhuvaneśvara Ins. of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, *IB*, p. 33, v. 3 and 16.

[198] *Ibid*, v. 7.

[199] *Ibid*, v. 9.

[200] *IB*, p. 21, LL. 43-45.

[201] *History of Bengal*, Dacca, 1943, Vol. II, p. 355.

[202] Prof. F. Kielhorn, Sanskrit Plays Partly Preserved as Inscriptions at Ajmere, *IA*, XX, 1891, pp. 201 ff; Beruchstücke ichscher Sihauspiele Inschriften Zu Ajmere, *Göttinger Festschrift*, 1901.

[203] *I Götinger Festschrift*, Plate I.

This Brāhmaṇa settlement of Ṭakārī had become very famous in the 10th-11th centuries. Several epigraphs mention the Brāhmaṇas of Ṭakārī, who migrated to Orissa, Bengal, the Chandella kingdom, Mālavā, Karṇāṭaka and Assam and obtained royal patronage.[205] Curiously enough, except one[206] all the Brāhmaṇas from Ṭakārī, mentioned in these plates as the recipients of royal gifts, belonged to the Āṅgirasa group with Bhāradvāja as their *gotra*, and Āṅgirasa, Bṛihaspati and Bhāradvāja as their *pravaras*. The Silimpur inscription underlines this characteristic when it records, "Of those who had their birth in the family of the Āṅgirases . . , and who could excel in declaring a common lineage with Bhāradvāja, dwelt in by families held in esteem by Āryas, was a place Ṭakārī within the limits of Śrāvastī."[207] Thus, the introduction of Śubhānanda, the Brāhmaṇa from the Takārī settlement of the Āṅgirasas, in the *Lalitavigraharāja*, and the depiction of the profound respect of Vigraharāja IV towards him, indicate the influence of Āṅgirasa Brāhmaṇas in the Chāhamāna territory. Further, Kadambavāsa, the minister under Someśvara and Pṛithvīrāja III, belonged to the Dadhīcha stock,[208] which as we shall see, was connected with the Bhārgavas.[209]

Thus, the Bhṛigvāṅgirases who had previously subsisted mainly on the tribal economy of the Brāhmaṇa villages, now in the early Mediaeval age entered the royal courts based on the feudal or imperial economy. This change in economy replaced in part the traditionally sacred fidelity to the tribe by personal relationship between king or feudal chief and courtiers. Consequently, the tribe in general sank into insignificance and king emerged as a single important factor conditioning the body-politic. Thus, the courtly school of history, nourished under the traditions and influence of the later Bhṛigvāṅgirases, was centred round the personality of the royal hero, in contradistinction to the *vaṁśa* composed by earlier Bhṛigvāṅgirases who subsisted on the natural economy of the tribal type.

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[204] *Ibid*, Plate I.

[205] (1) Māndhātā Plates of Devapāla, *EI*, IX, 110. (2) Silimpur ins. of Jayapāla, *Ibid*, XIII, 290. (3) Katak Plates of Mahāśivagupta, L. 33, *ibid*, III, 348. (4) Katak Plates of Mahābhavagupta, *ibid*, III, 350. (5) Koḷḷagallu ins. of Khottiga, *ibid*, XXI, 26. (6) Nanyaura Plates of Devapāla and Jayavarman, *ibid*, IX, 103. (7) Rajim Plates of Tīvaradeva, L. 23, *CII*, III, 295. (8) Amoda Plates of Pṛithvīdeva II, *CIII*, IV, 475. (9) BAS, Plates of Dhanga, *IA*, XVI, 201. (10) Kalas Budrukha Plates of Bhillama III, *ibid*, XVII, 121. (11) Banda District Plates of Madanavarman, *ibid*, XVI, 208. See also *Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī*, 155; *IA*, XLVIII, 208; LX, 14.

[206] *CII*, IV, 475. [207] *EI*, XIII, p. 290, verse 2.

[208] The *Pṛithvīrāja Raso* invariably mentions him as Dahiyā Kaimāsa.

[209] See *infra*, pp. 51-53.

Secondly, here for the first time, historiography was based on court organīzation in which the prince, the poet, the courtier and the chronicler worked in unison. Of several reasons for this cohesion, one which is very important for the study of historiography is the Bhṛigvāṅgiras element which brought the prince and the poet much closer. Even in earlier stages, the Bhṛigvāṅgirases largely influenced the composition of heroic poetry on historical themes. But then they composed the *vaṁśas* mainly of the Ikshvākus, the Ailas, the Bharatas and others—the dynasties which flourished in the distant past. Now, in the early Mediaeval age, the *Brahma-kshatra* families with supposed or genuine affiliations with the Bhṛigvāṅgirases established kingdoms in several parts of the country. The Vākāṭakas belonged to the Vishṇuvṛiddha[210] and the Kadambas to the Hārīta group[211]—both under the Āṅgirasa family.[212] Some of the ruling families of the Chālukyas associated themselves with the Hārītas,[213] whereas others claimed a connection with the Bhāradvājas[214] of the Āṅgirasa group. The Chāhamānas and the Dādhīchas were respectively Bhārgavas[215] and Sārasvatas. This group-affiliation brought further integration of the prince and the poet.

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[210] For the *gotra* of the Vākāṭakas see Basim Plates of Vindhyaśakti II, *SI*, p. 407, LL. 2-3.

[211] *Infra*, pp. 195 and 204.

[212] *Kūrma P.* I, 20, 25-8; *Liṅga P.* I, 65, 39-43; *Vāyu P.* 88, 71-9; *Vishṇu P.* IV, 3, 2-3.

[213] *DKD*, 278a, 339; *Hy. Ar. Series*, No. 8, pp. 9, 17; etc. *SII*, I, 58 fn. 1.

[214] *A.R., the M.A.D.* 1935, p. 117; *EI*, I, 257, verse 33.

[215] See *infra* pp. 51-54; 191.

These two facts account for the rise of royal biographies from material culled from the *vaṁśa* lore. The continuation of the Bhṛigvāṅgirases as the writers of historical works from the Vedic age to the Mediaeval period, and the change in their economic status are very important for explaining several features of Indian historiography. The change in economic status at once accounts for three important developments in the history of Indian historical writing—the discontinuation of the composition of *vaṁśa* in the *Purāṇas* after the 4th century A.D., the introduction of the Puranic element in the writings of *vaṁśa* by royal officers and poets of the early Mediaeval age, and the rise of the historical narratives. The continuation on the other hand sheds light on the curious phenomenon of Indian historiography—the persistence of historical traditions of the hoary past manifested variously in later epics in the form of mythology as an attempt of later dynasties to associate themselves with the ancient lines of the Aikshvākus and the Ailas, and a nostalgia towards the distant past expressed in the anachonistic representation of contemporary rulers in the roles of ancient heroes such as Rāma,[216] the Aikshvāku, and Bhīma the Pāṇḍava.[217]

Historical Narratives: Pattern and Chronology

Thus for the first time in the early Mediaeval age, historiography was based on court organization, having a real unity between prince, poet, courtier and chronicler. Naturally, therefore, the historical tradition assumed a new complexion. It became an effective medium of expression for courtly culture, an organ for princely propaganda and an instrument for the propagation of new social values—of chivalry, heroism and loyalty. It accordingly framed new literary conventions, novel devices of narratives and a different symbolism.

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[216] See *infra*, p. 233.

[217] For example, Ranna's; *Gadāyuddha*. "With regard to his other work, the *Gadāyuddha*, Ranna says that in admiration of the valour, liberality and other virtues of the king Taila's son Satyāśraya, he took him for his hero and identifying him with the Pāṇḍava prince Bhīma, composed the poem". *IA*, XL, 41.

Firstly, the theme of historical narratives was limited only to some aspects of the life of the king. Therefore the broad meaning of *itihāsa* that it comprised 'ancient events' arranged in the form of a story to illustrate the truths of the moral, aesthetic, wordly and spiritual spheres,[218] was narrowed down to an account of events culminating in the achievement of royal glory by king. Because of the romantic spirit of the age, the ornate style of the epic, and the tradition of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Bṛihatkathā*, the poet-historians represented the abstract idea of royal glory in the form of a beautiful princess symbolising the goddess of Royal Fortune (*rājya-śrī*), whose love the king wins after overcoming insurmountable difficulties. The idea is implicit in the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* where immediately after liberating Sītā from the thraldom of Rāvaṇa, Rāma, becomes the king of Kośala. The *Bṛihatkathā* gives an elaborate treatment of this motif. It was predicted that the husband of Madanamañjukā would be the emperor of the Vidyādharas. The prince Naravāhanadatta thwarted the obstructive designs of his adversaries, married Madanamañjukā and became the emperor. From the fourth century A.D., this motif of royal glory became prevalent. In different forms, it occurs in the *Raghuvaṁśa*,[219] the *Ratnāvalī*,[220] the *Bālabhārata*[221] and numerous other[222] historical works. Inscriptions of the

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[218] See *supra*, pp. 10-11 for the concept of *itihāsa* in the *Nirukta* and the *Arthaśāstra*. The Mīmāṁsakas considered ancient events as *arthavāda*, i.e. illustrations of Vedic precepts on rituals and social and moral institutions. (*Śābara Bhāshya* on the *Mīmāṁsā Sūtras*, 2.1.33, Calcutta, 1873 p. 127). So also Nyāya. (The *Vātsyāyana Bhāshya* on the *Nyāya Sūtras* 2.1.64). The *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* mentions *aitihya* as one of the four means of attaining knowledge. (Keith, *The Philosophy and Religion of the Vedas*, H.O.S., p. 482). The *Mahābhārata* implies the broader meaning of *itihāsa* in (I. 10-14) "the meritorious tales collected in the *Purāṇas* filled with the precepts of duty and profit, the acts of princes and great-souled seers. See Seig, *ERE*, VII, p. 460. See also Jinasena, *Ādipurāṇa*, I, 24-25. Stock definition of *itihāsa*, however, is:

> Dharmārthakāmamokshāṇām-upadeśa-samanvitam.
> Pūrvavṛittaṁ kathāyuktaṁ-itihasam-prachakshate.

[219] *Padmā padmātapatreṇa bheje sāmrājyadīkshitaṁ*, IV, 5.

[220] See *infra*.

[221] Prologue, (N.S. Edition).

[222] *NSC*, I, 59; VDC, III, 2; IX, 151 etc.

Guptas,[223] the Pālas,[224] the Pratihāras,[225] the Rāshṭrakūṭas[226] and others[227] make frequent use of this motif. Writers on *Sāhitya-śāstra* also recognise it and enjoin that the abduction of a girl and her union with the hero should be described in a historical prose narrative (*ākhyāyikā*).[228]

Secondly, in these historical narratives, the process of the achievement of royal glory by the king is invariably developed in five stages of the beginning (*prārambha*), the efforts (*prayatna*), the hope of achieving the end (*prāptyāśā*), the certainty of achievement (*niyatāpti*) and the achievement (*phalāgama*). These stages supply an ordered sequence in the story. The use of chronology in terms of ordered sequence of actions rather than in the framework of dates and years is a characteristic of Indian thought.

In ancient India, time was generally viewed in terms of the sequence of actions. The *Sāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka*[229] states that time unites procession (*gatī*), recession (*nivṛiti*) and stasis (*sthiti*) and by this it unites the whole universe. According to Bhartṛi-hari, 'Kāla, which is the string-puller (*sūtradhāra*) in the puppet-show of this world, brings about an ordered sequence in the world by means of his permissive (*abhyanujñā*) and preventive (*pratibandha*) powers. In the absence of the preventive power of Time, there would be neither a sequence, nor progression nor regression. All actions would be simultaneous and absolute chaos would reign. A seed, a sprout, a stem and a stalk—all would emerge and exist simultaneously. Therefore all objects having an origination, must have *Kāla* as an additional contributory cause for ordered sequence.[230]

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[223] Junagarh Ins. of Skandagupta, *SI*, p. 301, verse 5.

[224] *EI*, IV, p. 248, verse 4.

[225] *EI*, XVIII, verse 18, p. 109.

[226] *EI*, VI, verse 3, p. 243.

[227] *IA*, VI, p. 210, L. 5; *ibid*, IX, p. 34; *EI*, XI, p. 17, L. 4; etc.

[228] *Kanyāharaṇa-saṁgrāma-vipralaṁbhodayānvitā*. Bhāmaha, *Kāvyālaṅkāra*, I, 27.

[229] *SA*, 7.

[230] *Vākyapadīya*, III, 9, 4-5, see also the commentary of Helārāja on above.

This sequential form of time in place of the chronological was due to the principle of causality and theories of change which developed in early times. Reality (*satyaṁ*), according to major schools of philosophy, was of two kinds—the absolute reality which is beyond changes, and the relative reality of 'name and shape' (*nāma-rūpa*) which is always in a state of flux. History is concerned with the second category of reality. The changes in the relative reality are to be understood in terms of cause and effect. The theory of causality which is variously developed in Vedānta, Sāṁkhya and Nyāya schools as *vivarta*, *pariṇāma* and *ārambha*, forms the bed-rock of metaphysics in orthodox schools of philosophy. In view of these theories, the development of a thing is judged against the prior and posterior forms, that is to say, in a sequence of changes. Evidently, in this framework, the chronological form of time as dates and years would have been meaningless.

CHAPTER II

THE HARSHACHARITA

A Fresh Approach

HISTORY MEANS both past events and their records. In the second sense, history is a conceptual integration of past events in the framework of time and space—the filtering of the past actuality into an intelligible whole through the idealising process which happens in the mind of the historian. It is, in essence, an abstraction of actuality for the sake of its integration with human culture in terms of sequential time. Annals and chronicles integrate this actuality at a lower level while history does it at much deeper ones. The closer the integration of actuality with cultural tradition, the greater will be the abstraction and the higher the historical form.

Therefore, a study of the actuality from a historical record is a complicated process. It requires an appreciation of the nature and form of the idealising agents—a penetration into the mental recess of the historian, his spiritual make-up and ideal mould.

Unfortunately the *Harshacharita* was discovered and studied at the time when the literary antiquarianism was transforming itself into an archaeological discipline and positive philosophy was influencing the orientalists in India, with the result that they neglected to study the idealising process and contented themselves with the externalities of the narrative. This, however, vitiated their whole approach. Thus, for example, it was thought that the *Harshacharita* is fragmentary[1] simply because it does not deal with the complete life of Harsha and abruptly (?) stops after the meeting of Harsha with Rājyaśrī. An investigation into the purpose and form of the narrative would have at once indicated that the poet-historian had all along been working to achieve this end—the meeting of the king with Rājyaśrī. Moreover, there is definite evidence that the *Harshacharita* is a complete and finished product of art. Bāṇa never intended to write further than this stage. In the epic style, he states that the complete life of Harsha was "beyond the comprehension of the omniscient, beyond the capacity of the god of speech, and beyond the strength of the goddess of eloquence"[2] and therefore, he would attempt only a part of it.

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[1] Keith, *HSL*, 314; De and Dasgupta, *HCSL*, 229; Cowell and Thomas, *HC*, Preface XI, Krishnamacharya, *HCSL*, 446.

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Further, in accordance with the technique of Indian dramas, this part was organically designed, falling into five well-defined stages[3] of the Beginning, the Efforts, the Hope of Achieving the End, the Certainty of Success and the End. Since the last stage of the End is reached with the recovery of Rājyaśrī—the royal glory, the story is complete.[4]

The completion is also indicated in the last paragraph which assumes the form of a benediction:

> "At the close of the evening-tide, the moon was brought to the King as a respectful offering by the Night, as if it were the impersonated Glory of his Race—bringing him the stamp of the primeval King on the silver patent of his sovereignty or the Goddess of Fortune[5] conducting a messenger from the White *Dvīpa* to animate him to the conquest of all the seven *Dvīpas*."[6]

Lastly—and this is conclusive—, the autobiography of Bāṇa, in which the story of Harsha's life is emboxed, is resumed in the concluding portion of the *Harshacharita*. There are two stories in the narrative—the account of Bāṇa and his ancestry, and the history of Harsha. The first was abruptly interrupted by Śyāmala who requested Bāṇa to narrate the glorious deeds of Harsha[7] and thus furnished an excuse to Bāṇa for emboxing the royal biography in the story of his own life. However, towards the conclusion of the book, the thread of the first story is resumed with the statement that "And there, even when I[8] was relating to my friends this story which ends with the recovery of Rājyaśrī, the sun also crossed the sky."[9] The reversion to the initial story, which is pursued to the end, is a definite indication that the book is complete.

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[2] *Harshacharita*, Ed. by A. A. Führer, Phil D., M. A., *BSP*, Bombay, 1909, p. 140,

[3] See *infra*, pp. 75 ff. [4] See *infra*, p. 76.

[5] Cowell and Thomas translate the word *āyati* as future. But see the commentary of Śaṅkara—*āyatyāgami-śubha-daivena*.

[6] *HC*, III, p. 342; *CTHC*, p. 260.

[7] *HC*, III, pp. 139-140; *CTHC*, 74-77.

The misconception, that the *Harshacharita* is fragmentary, distorted the vision of the historians. It prevented them from studying it as a complete whole, organically designed and artistically composed with some specific purpose. They therefore missed the idea which gave meaning to the whole narrative and which, like a subterranean current, existed hidden always beneath the narrative. Like children picking pebbles from the sea-shore, they contented themselves with the extracting of facts from various places in the narrative on no basis other than their predilections. This 'pick and choose' method, however, involved two-fold distortion. First, the facts were torn out of the context supplied by Bāṇa and secondly, they were given an arbitrary subjective setting by historians.

Now, therefore, what is needed is a fresh approach directed towards the reconstruction of the actuality of Harsha's life from the *Harshacharita*, after studying the formative power of the idealising agents through the form of the narrative, the cultural outfit of the author and the moulding influences of the tradition on him.

Ancestry of Bāṇa and Historical Traditions

In the style of ancient historians, Bāṇa tells us of the origin of the Vātsyāyana line of the Bhārgava Brāhmaṇas to which he belonged. Shorn of all epic details, the account in the *Harshacharita* shows that Sārasvata was the son of Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, by Dadhīcha—a prince born of a Kshatriya princess and the Brāhmaṇa sage Chyavana. Dadhīcha had a Brāhmaṇa brother whose wife Akshamālā gave birth to a son Vatsa. When Sarasvatī finally departed for her heavenly abode, Akshamālā brought up both the children—Sārasvata and Vatsa. The former eventually retired to the forest while the latter became the progenitor of the Vātsyāyana Brāhmaṇas.[10] The development and significance of this story of Dadhīcha and Sarasvatī would be discussed later.[11] It is, however, clear that the story was meant to indicate that Bāṇa was a Vātsyāyana Brāhmaṇa of the Bhārgava lineage with Dadhīcha-Sarasvatī associations.

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[8] *Scil.*, Bāṇa.

[9] *HC*, VIII, p. 340; *CTHC*, 258. The sentence in the text is: *tatra cha Rājyaśrī-vyatikara-kathāṁ kathayata-eva praṇayibhyo ravirapi tatāra gagana-talam.* The translation of Cowell and Thomas is: "As he was relating there to his friends the story of the recovery of Rājyaśrī, the sun completed his journey through the heavens." The word *kathayataḥ* in the passage does not necessarily imply third person. Moreover, in this translation, the significance of *tatra cha*, *vyatikara* and *eva* has been lost.

That such Brāhmaṇas existed in the 7th century is known from inscriptions. The Dadhimātā temple inscription[12] composed in Jodhpur about a decade before the *Harshacharita* was written, mentions Dadhyā Brāhmaṇas, to be identified with the Dādhicha Brāhmaṇas of the region,[13] who have six sub-castes—Dādhicha, Sārasvata, Gauḍa, Gurjara, Pārikha and Śikhāvāla.[14] The inscription gives a list of fourteen Brāhmaṇas, all of whom belonged to Vatsa *gotra*.

These Dādhīcha Brāhmaṇas still trace their origin to the sage Dadhīcha. According to a tradition current amongst them, Dadhīcha, the son of Atharvaṇa, married Vedavatī, who gave birth to a posthumous child Pippalāda. The latter had twelve sons, Vatsa being one of them.[15] The tradition differs from the account given in the *Harshacharita* only on one important point that in the former Dadhīcha is mentioned as the son of Atharvaṇa whereas in the latter he is the son of Chyavana. However this confusion of patronymics may be traced back to the Vedic period. While the Vedic tradition[16] generally mentions Dadhīcha with the patronymic of Atharvaṇa, the *Pañchaviṁśa*[17] regards him as the descendant of Chyavana. Baudhāyana lists the Dādhīchas under the Bhṛigus.[18] In short, like Bāṇa, these Dādhīchas belong to the Vatsa gotra, the Bhārgava lineage and the Sārasvata group. The inscription of the Dadhimātā temple further indicates their existence in Rajasthan during 7th century A.D.

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[10] *HC*, I pp. 11-60; *CTHC*, 4-31. [11] See *infra*, pp. 38-39.

[12] Dadhimātā ins. of the time of Drulhaṇa, Gupta Saṁ. 289, *EI*, XI, 299.

[13] *Ibid*, p. 300.

[14] Sherring, M.A., *Hindu Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I, p. 69.

[15] *Dadhīcha* (*sic*)-*vaṁśa-varṇana:* Chunnilalji Borāvaḍā, saṁ. 1988, Ajmer. See also *Dadhīcha Jayantī ke Utsava kā Vivaraṇa*, Jodhpur, 1925. *Dadhīcha Conference Pushkara kā Vivaraṇa*, Ajmer, 1925; Sherring M.A., *Hindu Tribes and Castes*, London, 1872, Vol. I, p. 69.

[16] *RV*, I, 117, 22; 116, 12; 80, 16; VI, 16, 14; *ŚB* IV, 1, 5, 18.

As a Vatsa of the Bhārgava lineage, Bāṇa must have had the five *pravaras*[19] of Bhārgava, Chyavana, Āpnuvāna, Aurva and Jāmadagnya. Brāhmaṇas of this group inhabited Eastern India in fairly large numbers during the early mediaeval period. As many as five inscriptions of the Senas from Vijayasena (c. 1095–1158) to Viśvarūpasena and the copper-plate of Nayapāla, the king of Kāmarūpa,[20] make a reference to them.

These Vātsyāyanas belonged to that composite family of the Bhṛigvāṅgiras whose history we have traced from the later Vedic period. In the *Harshacharita*, Bāṇa's cousin Śyāmala states, with a sense of pride in his Bhārgava lineage; "Who could be without a curiosity regarding the story of Harsha's life—a second Mahābhārata? Let our Bhṛigu race become even purer by the purificatory hearing of his deeds."[21] Dadhīcha, the ancestor of Bāṇa, is introduced as "the pride of the Bhṛigu race, and the externalized life of Chyavana."[22] In the tradition, Dadhīcha is described as a Bhārgava, an Ātharvaṇa and also as an Āṅgirasa. Baudhāyana mentions the Dādhīchas under the Bhṛigus.[23] The *Ṛigveda* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, associated Dadhīcha with the Ātharvaṇa lineage.[24] In some hymns of the *Rigveda*[25] and in the *Pañchaviṁśa*[26] *Brāhmaṇa*, he is called an Āṅgirasa. In the *Mahābhārata*, he is represented both as an Āṅgirasa and as a Bhārgava.

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[17] *GPM*, 79 n. 17 but see *Pañchaviṁśa* Br. XII, 8, 6,

[18] *Ibid*, 79. [19] *Ibid*, p. 31.

[20] Barrackpur Plates of Vijayasena, *IB*, 63; Govindpur Plates of Lakshmaṇasena, *ibid*, 96; Madanpur Plates of Keśavasena, *ibid*, 125; Madanpada Plates of Viśvarūpa, *ibid*, 137, 147; Irda Plates of Nayapāla, *EI*, XXII, 151.

[21] *HC*, III, p. 140; *CTHC*, 76-77. [22] *HC*, I, pp. 41-42; *CTHC*, 20.

[23] *GPM*, 79 n. 17.

[24] *RV*, I, 116, 12; 117, 22; *ŚB*. IV, I, 5, 18; 14, 1. etc.

[25] I, 139, 9.

[26] XII, 8, 6. See also *Tait*. *Saṁ*., V, 1, 4, 4.

As we have seen, this fused family was very intimately connected with the *itihāsa purāṇa* tradition. The Bhārgavas and probably the Dādhīchas had preserved this association during the times of Bāṇa also. A verse of the Dadhimātā inscription of the Dādhīchas is found in the Devī-māhātmya of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa.*[27] This is rather strange. No other inscription of the period quotes this verse or, as a matter of fact, any verse of similar nature. Therefore, this unique reference may indicate the association of the Dādhīchas and the Devīmāhātmya of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa.* The four cousins of Bāṇa were described as "versed in the acts of all monarchs and sages of Purāṇa, inspired in the mind by the *Mahābhārata*, and acquainted with the entire history (*itihāsa*)."[28] The reference to the recitation of the *Vāyu Purāṇa* by Sudṛishṭi as a usual occurrence indicates the Puranic influence in the daily round of Bāṇa's family.[29]

The second important characteristic of the Bhārgava family which continued to the Early Mediaeval period is its specialisation in *dharmaśāstra* and *nīti* (polity).[30] The *Manusmṛiti* is a Bhārgava text. Chapters on *dharmaśāstra*. and polity in the *Mahābhārata* are supposed to be the compositions of the *Bhārgavas.*[31] In the tenth and eleventh centuries, Bhārgava Brāhmaṇas such as Īśānadeva and Viśvarūpa were appointed as the reciters of moral codes (*nītipāṭhaka*) by the Senas of Bengal.[32]

The family tradition of the Bhārgavas had very strongly influenced Bāṇa in his composition of the *Harshacharita.* Śyāmala describes the *Harshacharita* as a second *Mahābhārata*,[33] whereas the minstrel Sūchībāṇa equates it with the *Vāyupurāṇa.*[34] An elaborate *Mahābhārata* setting, provided to the *Harshacharita*,[35] and the story of Dadhīcha and Sarasvatī[36] clearly demonstrate the formative influence of the *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition on the *Harshacharita.* The poet-historian himself admits the facts when he praises "only those poets who embracing all narratives fill the world like the Bhārata story."[37] The second characteristic of the Bhārgava family—its association with polity—, is well reflected in the long speeches of Siṁhanāda and Skandagupta on polity and royal behaviour.[38]

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[27] Cp. LL. 11-12, *EI*, XI, 304 and the *Devīmāhātmya*, XI, 10.
[28] *HC*, III, p. 133. [29] *HC*, III, pp. 131-132.
[30] Sukthankar, V.S., *Critical Studies in the Mahābhārata*, 280 ff.
[31] Sukthankar, *op. cit.*, p. 335. [32] *IB*, 125, 137.
[33] *HC*, p. 140. [34] *HC*, p. 132. [35] *Infra*, p. 37.
[36] *Infra*, pp. 38-39.

The Harshacharita *and the Itihāsa-Purāṇa Tradition*—I

Bāṇa describes the *Harshacharita* as an *ākhyāyikā*[39] in contradistinction to his other work *Kādambarī*, which is expressly called a *kathā* or prose-romance.[40] One main difference between *ākhyāyikā* and *kathā* is that the former is based on an actual biography (*svacheshṭita-vṛitta*) whereas the latter is a fictitious tale.[41] This distinction is important as the classification of forms on the basis of the historical nature of the theme or otherwise exists only in case of the *gadya-kāvya* (prose compositions). It further assumes significance when we note that Bāṇa himself classes *ākhyāyikā* not with poetic compositions such as epics and romances but with such mythologico-historical forms of writing as *ākhyāna*, *itihāsa* and *purāṇa*.[42] The *Mahābhāshya* also groups these four genres together.[43] The statement of Kauṭilya is more definite, as it explicitly mentions *ākhyāyikā* along with *purāṇa*, *itivṛitta* etc., as a constituent part of *itihāsa*.[44]

The word *ākhyāyikā* occurs in the works of the Vedic exegesis. The Vṛittikāra, (who was either Varshagupta or Baudhāyana) regards *ākhyāyikā* and the statements with the particle '*iti*' (as in *itihāsa*), as some of the characteristics of the *Brāhmaṇa* literature.[45] Śabara[46] cites an example of *ākhyāyikā* from the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*.[47] The word *ākhyāyikā* itself occurs in the above-mentioned work in connection with an anecdote introduced in the text to explain the injunction that a student and a learned teacher should not quarrel with each other.[48] But these *ākhyāyikās* are different in literary form and style from the *Harshacharita*. They are simple anecdotes drawn from the tradition. Still in view of the fact that the *Brāhmaṇas*, especially in those parts which are meant to explain the ritualistic precepts of the Vedas, contain elements of the *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition, these references are important as they associate *ākhyāyikā* with this mythologico-historical tradition.

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[37] *HC*, *Intr*. verse 10. [38] *Ibid*, pp. 259-262; 267-271.

[39] *HC*, (Introduction) Verse, 19.

[40] *Kādambarī* (Introduction) verse 20.

[41] Bhāmaha, *Kāvyālaṁkāra*, I, 25-29; see, The *ākhyāyikā* and the *Kathā* in classical Sanskrit, in *Some Problems of Sanskrit Poetics*, Calcutta, 1959, pp. 65-80.

[42] *Kādambarī* (the meeting of Chandrāpīḍa and his mother) Agrawala, V.S., *Kādambarī*, p. 13.

[43] IV: 2. 60. [44] I, 5.

[45] See *Śābara Bhāshya* on the *Mīmāṁsā-sūtras*, I, 1.22. Calcutta, Bibliothica Edition, p. 127.

[46] *Ibid.*, 127. [47] I, 10. 2.

This tradition of the Bhṛigvāṅgirases had a formative influence on the Bhārgava author of the *Harshacharita*. To Bāṇa, the *Mahābhārata*, a representative work of the *itihāsa* tradition, was an ideal composition.[49] He consciously imitated its style. The *Mahābhārata* opens with an account of the Bhārgava lineage at the instance of the *kulapati* Śaunaka. The *Harshacharita*, likewise, starts with the history of the Bhārgava-Vātsyāyanas. Ugraśravas, the *sūta*, had come from the sacred site of Samantapañchaka (Kurukshetra) to Naimisha forest, where he recited the *Mahābhārata*. Before starting the account of Harsha's life, Bāṇa makes a significant allusion to Samantapañchaka in his description of "the sun sinking in the mass of the evening glow like Bhārgava Rāma in the great pool of blood at Samantapañchaka."[50] The narration of the *Māhābhārata* was started by Ugraśravas at the request of certain sages headed by Śaunaka. Similarly in the *Harshacharita*, Bāṇa recounts the heroic deeds of Harsha at the instance of Śyāmala in the circle of kinsmen. The prose-romances and epics of the Early Mediaeval period immediately start with the description of the capital city, country or the hero. Therefore, this method of introducing the narrative by a dialogue in the *Harshacharita* bespeaks of the influence of the *Mahābhārata*. Above all, the fact that in the epilogue of his work, Bāṇa represents his cousin Śyāmala as having described the *Harshacharita* as a second *Mahābhārata*,[51] discloses the intention of the author of taking the latter as the model for his work.

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[48] I, 63.

[49] *HC*, Introduction, verse 9.

[50] *HC*, p. 141, *CTHC*, 77.

[51] *HC*, p. 140.

Further, the story of Dadhīcha and Sarasvatī, as told in the *Harshacharita*, is framed after the ancient *ākhyāna* of Purūravas and Urvaśī. The *Ṛigveda* contains some elements of the story of Urvaśī, a nymph, who lived on earth as a wife of the king Purūravas, till she became pregnant and then she vanished "like the first of dawns".[52] The story is told with some variations in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,[53] and *Vishṇu*-[54] and *Matsya-Purāṇas*.[55] According to the last named work, Purūravas vanquished the demon Keśin and liberated from him the nymphs Chitralekhā and Urvaśī. Indra once arranged the representation of a drama *Lakshmī-Svayaṁvara* under the direction of the sage Bharata, in which Urvaśī filled the rôle of Lakshmī. But so greatly was she charmed by the handsome Purūravas, that she forgot her rôle and so incurred the displeasure of Bharata. He thereupon cursed her to be transformed into a creeper. In the *Vikramorvaśīyaṁ*, Kālidāsa introduced a few changes. According to this, the sage cursed Urvaśī that she would no longer find any place in heaven as she had violated his instructions. Indra, however, modified the curse and addressing her said, "I should favour in this matter the royal sage (*scil.* Purūravas) with whom you are so attached. You unite with him, as you desire, until he chances to behold the child who will be heir to him."[56]

The story of Dadhīcha and Sarasvatī is found neither in the Vedic nor in the Purāṇic literature. The *Talavakāra Brāhmaṇa*, however, mentions that the sage Chyavana, the father of Dadhīcha, lived on the banks of the Sarasvatī.[57] The *Mahābhārata* contains a story that the sage Dadhīcha was performing austerities on the banks of the Sarasvatī when Indra sent a charming nymph Alambushā to lure him away from the austerities. While offering a libation of water to the gods, the excited sage impregnated the

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[52] X, 95.

[53] XI, 5, 1, 1. Cf. III, 4, 1, 22; Also *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.*, VIII, 10.

[54] IV, 4, 34-93.

[55] XXIV, 24ff; Ānandāśrama, Poona Ed., 1907, p. 43. See also *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, IX, 14, 15-49; *Vā.* 91, 1-52.

[56] N.S.P., Bombay Ed., 1942, Act. III, p. 103.

[57] *The Jaiminī-Upanishad-Brāhmaṇa*, 186; *JAOS*, XVI, 251, also XI, p. CXLV.

Sarasvatī who gave birth to a child Sārasvata.[58] The story is considerably changed in the *Harshacharita*. Firstly, the sage appears as a Kshatriya prince and the river is transformed into the goddess. Secondly, the descent of Sarasvatī from heaven to earth is represented as caused by the displeasure of Durvāsas who cursed her to be banished for ever from her heavenly abode. Brahmā, however, modified the curse so that it was to last only until Sarasvatī should behold the lotus-face of her child.

The love of a divine lady for a mortal king, the banishment from heaven due to the curse of a sage, and the curtailment of the period of the curse till the birth of a child, are remarkable points of similarity between the two stories of Purūravas and Urvaśī, and Dadhīcha and Sarasvatī.

The Ratnāvalī *and the* Harshacharita—II

The *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition was transmitted through the recitation of *ākhyānas* and kindred forms of narrative on religious and popular occasions. The recitation was generally accompanied by music and mime. The *Pāriplava ākhyāna* was perhaps scenically represented at the time of horse-sacrifice.[59] That the *Sūtas*, who were the traditional custodians of the *itīhāsa* tradition, came to be associated with dancing, is known from an emended reading of a passage in the *Yajurveda*.[60] A Sanchi bas-relief represents a group of reciters, who in the course of recitation dance and indicate the sentiments of the characters through gestures and mimes. The *Mahābhāshya* mentions reciters (*grānthakas* who divided themselves into two groups, evidently for representing the two sets of characters in the story.[61] Bāṇa makes a reference to 'pantomimic recitation' (*utsāha*).[62] Further, the dramas and *itihāsa* were so closely associated that some literary critics even in the Early Mediaeval Age regarded them as similar ways of acquiring knowledge of the past.[63]

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[58] *Śalyaparvan*, (*Sārasvataparvan*), Southern recension, *XLVI*, 4-14; Northern recensions, Chapter *LI* and *LII*.

[59] Seig, E., *ERE*, VII, 460.

[60] *Nṛittāya sūtaṁ gītāya śailūshaṁ*, *Yajurveda*, XXX.6. But *contra gītāya sūtani, nṛittāya śailūshaṁ*, *Tait. Br.*, III, 4, 2. See *supra*, p. 23 and fn. 5.

[61] III.1.26. for interpretation see De and Dasgupta, *HCSL*, 644.

[62] '*udīryamāṇa-gītyādharabhūta-padopachārat-kāvyamapyutsāha iti*' Śaṅkara on *HC*, Intr., verse XVIII.

This close relation of dramaturgy and histrionics with *itīhāsa* influenced the nature of *ākhyāyikā*. The *Kāmasūtra* mentions a literary genre—*Nāṭakākhyāyikā*, a dramatized prose-narrative.[64] It was not merely recited or read but staged, because the *Kāmasūtra* considers its proper appreciation by seeing (*darśana*) as a mark of culture. Naturally, therefore, the *Harshacharita* shows some dramatic features.

Thus, the *Harshacharita* opens with a description of the academic assembly (*vidyāgoshṭhī*) of Brahmā, where Sarasvatī, the Goddess of Learning, was cursed by Durvāsas. Brahmā thereupon "uplifting his form, which wore the sacrificial thread as though his birth from the lotus had left a fibre (*mṛiṇāla-sūtra*) about him", spoke with a voice which "echoed through the spheres like a drum heralding with honour the departure of Sarasvatī."[65]

As dramas were staged in celebrated assemblies[66] and started with a prologue which consisted in a dialogue between the stage-manager (*sūtradhāra*) and an actress[67] or one of his assistants, hinting at the incidents of the drama, followed by music (*saṅgītakaṁ*),[68] the above description, which makes a reference to an assembly, to Brahmā with a *sūtra*,[69] Brahmā's dialogue with Sarasvatī, and to the auspicious notes of music, closely resemble the beginning of a drama.

The *Harshacharita*[70] concludes with a benediction to the reigning king which is very similar to the *Bharatavākya* (the benedictory conclusion) of a conventional drama. Not only do the beginning and epilogue show dramatic features, but the development of the theme also shows the influence of dramas and dramaturgy.

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[63] *Daśarūpaka*, I, 6. sarcastically refers to such scholars as persons 'who have averted their faces from pleasure.'

[64] *Kāmasūtra*, I, 3.16. [65] *HC*, p. 18, *CTHC*, p. 7-8.

[66] *parishadapyeshā guṇa-grāhiṇī*, (*Ratnāvalī*, epilogue verses; *Priyadarśikā*, epilogue, verse 3).

[67] *Daśarūpaka*, III, 8.

[68] *Saṅgītakamanushṭhāmi*, *Mudrārākshasa*, prologue; see also prologues of the *Ratnāvalī* and the *Śākuntalam*.

[69] The word means both a fibre and a cord; here it evidently suggests a '*sūtradhāra*.'

[70] *HC*, pp. 342-43.

The influence of the *Vikramorvaśīyaṁ* on the composition of the story of Dadhīcha and Sarasvatī has been noted above. The story of Harsha's deeds was likewise modelled on the *Ratnāvalī*.

The *Ratnāvalī*[71] is one of the three dramas written by Harshavardhana, the royal hero of Bāṇa's prose-narrative. This short comedy describes the achievement of universal sovereignty by King Udayana with the help of incalculable workings of fate and the planned efforts of his minister Yaugandharāyaṇa.[72] It was prophesied by a sage of miraculous powers that whoever married the princess Ratnāvalī, would attain universal sovereignty. However, Vāsavadattā was the chief-queen of Udayana and, therefore, the marriage of Ratnāvalī with the latter could not be accomplished as the Siṁhala king did not want his daughter to be a rival co-wife of his niece Vāsavadattā. Without apprising the king of his plan, Yaugandharāyaṇa spread the rumour that Vāsavadattā was burnt alive, and then renewed the request of marriage. The Siṁhala princess was sent by a ship which was unfortunately wrecked. Ratnāvalī was, however, rescued and employed *incognito* as a maid to Vāsavadattā, and in that capacity the latter won the sisterly affection of the queen and eventually also the love of Udayana. Ratnāvalī was thus married to the Vatsa king, who consequently became a universal monarch.

Eco connection with Ceylon

The *Harshacharita*, likewise, aims at describing the achievement of universal sovereignty by Harsha. It is first indicated by the blessings of Lakshmī, the Goddess of Fortune, to Pushyabhūti that one of his descendants, Harshavardhana, would be a universal suzerain whose "flywhisk would be waved by the goddess herself."[73] This is repeated by the royal astrologer at the time of Harsha's birth[74] and by the king Prabhākara in his death-bed speech.[75] The conclusion of the *Harshacharita* also makes a reference to it.

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[71] Ed. K.P. Parab, NSP, Bombay, 1895.

[72] *Prārambhe' smin-svāmino vṛiddhi-hetau,*
Devenetthaṁ datta-hastāvalambe. Ratnāvalī, I, 7.

The word *vṛiddhi* is interpreted by Dhanañjaya in his *Avaloka* commentary as 'the attainment of success, which consists in king's obtaining universal sovereignty through his marriage with Ratnāvalī. *Daśarūpaka*, I,33; Hass, p. 11.

[73] *HC*, p. 169. [74] *Ibid*, p. 184. [75] *Ibid*, p. 220.

Secondly, the supernatural factor in the form of blessings for the achievement of universal suzerainty is also common to both texts. It was prophesied by a sage of miraculous powers that Ratnāvalī would be the consort of a universal monarch, while in the *Harshacharita* Pushyabhūti received a boon from Lakshmī that he would be an ancestor of a universal ruler.

In both cases, the universal sovereignty was connected with the king's meeting with a damsel—in the comedy, Udayana meets his betrothed consort Ratnāvalī and in the prose-narrative, Rājyaśrī was ultimately restored to her brother Harsha. Ratnāvalī, because of the prophecy of the *siddha*, and Rājyaśrī nominally—as the word Rājya-śrī means 'the goddess of fortune manifested in sovereignty'—and also actually, because the throne of Kanauj was obtained by Harsha through his sister, the widowed queen of Kanauj, brought suzerainty respectively to Udayana and Harsha.

As if not satisfied with the veiled allusion to the comedy, Bāṇa records the present of a *ratnāvalī* the jewelled (*ratna*) necklace (*ekāvalī*) by Divākara to Harsha after his meeting with Rājyaśrī.[76] To make the allusion still clearer, he describes the jewelled necklace as 'a banner, which announces the coming of embodied Imperial power' and as 'a *svayaṁvara* garland of the goddess of universal fortune (*bhuvanaśrī*).'[77]

The basic philosophy of both the works is also the same. The stage-manager in the prologue of the comedy says:

"Fate brings the loved one, and quickly restores him even from a different isle, or from the mid-ocean, nay even from the end of the quarters."[78] This evidently alludes to the incident of the comedy in which the Siṁhala princess Ratnāvalī was separated from her relations because of the ship-wreck but was eventually rescued and restored to her betrothed lover. The initial action of fate which consists in the ship-wreck and the throwing of the princess into a sea of troubles is indicated in an *āryā* of the sixth chapter of the *Harshacharita*:[79]

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[76] Jewelled (*HC*, VIII, verse 2, p. 309) necklace (*ekāvalī* p. 335). See also Chapter V, verse. 3.

[77] *Ibid*, p. 334. [78] *Ratnāvalī*, I.6. [79] VI, verse 3. p. 254.

"Like a (stormy) wind *upsetting a ship*, fate overwhelms even a man whose virtues are sung in distant isles and who has obtained the best of *a collection of jewels*."

The ultimate working of fate in the restoration of Ratnāvalī is perhaps alluded to in two *āryās* of the eighth chapter of the *Harshacharita*:

"By fate all desired things are produced for the fortunate. Who in the world would not be pleased by the association of a learned man, the prosperity attendant on meeting a kinsman loved and lost and the present of a costly *jewel*?"[80]

The last verse mentions the present of a jewel—*ratna*, mentioned subsequently in the prose as a necklace—*ekāvalī*—, thus making an explicit and clear reference to Ratnāvalī. The verse in the fifth chapter also alludes to the name of the Siṁhala princess in the form of a mass (*rāśi* = *avalī*) of jewels (*ratna*) in the context of a shipwreck.[81] Further, "the prosperity attendant on the restoration of a loved and lost kinsman" has a bearing on the stories both of the *Ratnāvalī* and the *Harshacharita*. Lastly the reference to the ship-wreck in the *āryā* leaves no doubt that Bāṇa is alluding to the *Ratnāvalī*, a comedy composed by his royal patron.

Moreover, sovereignty could be achieved through the mysterious workings of fate. Vāsavadattā, the chief consort of Udayana, was an impediment on the path of his attaining universal suzerainty through his marriage with Ratnāvalī. Likewise, Harsha could not become a king in the life-time of his brother Rājya. The ship-wreck which compelled Ratnāvalī to work as a maid and win the affection of the royal couple ultimately helped Yaugandharāyaṇa in his plan of uniting in marriage Udayana and Ratnāvalī. Similarly, the seemingly distressing circumstances in which Rājyavardhana and Grahavarman were killed, eventually paved the way for Harsha to become the ruler both of Thanesar and Kanauj.

So similar are the themes and there are such parallels in their development that one can hardly escape the conclusion that Bāṇa wrote the life of Harsha on the model of his hero's comedy—the *Ratnāvalī*.

[80] VIII, verse 2, p. 309; see also verse 1.

[81] *Dvīpopāgata-guṇamapi samupārjita-ratna-rāśi-sāramapi.*
Potaṁ pavana iva vidhiḥ purushamakāṇḍe nipātayati. *HC*, p. 254.

Ancient Fiction and the Harshacharita—III

Besides dramas and dramaturgy, the sisterly form of *kathā*, also influenced *ākhyāyikā*.

Broadly speaking, there were two types of fiction—first, a simple story as found in the anecdotal literature of the *Brāhmaṇas*, the Buddhist *avadānas* and folk-tales, and secondly, literary stories with long and sonorous compounds, and conventional descriptions of seasons, countries, lakes etc. The *Harshacharita* shows both these traits. Besides, the art of emboxing inset stories, which is a feature of the *kathā* literature, was adroitly utilized by Bāṇa to give the biography of his royal patron in the framework of his own history.

Further, the themes of both the works of Bāṇa show the influences of early fiction. That he was deeply indebted to the *Bṛihatkathā* for the theme of the *Kādambarī*, is recognized by modern as well as ancient authors.[82] The episode of Pushyabhūti and Lakshmī in the *Harshacharita*, is likewise an adaptation of the initial and final stories of the cycle of Vampire Legends.[83] Probably, these legends were originally separate.[84] They were, however, merged in the Kashmir recension of the *Bṛihatkathā* as both Kshemendra and Somadeva include them in their summaries of this work of Guṇāḍhya. The *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* and the *Kathāsaritsāgara* narrate with slight variations the story of an ascetic who tried to propitiate a vampire in order to attain the lordship over Vidyādharas. As this required the help of a warrior, he approached the king Trivikramasena of Pratishṭhāna and presented to him for years on end, gems concealed in fruits. Out of gratitude, therefore, the king agreed to help the ascetic. On the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight, wearing black apparel and holding a sword, the king went to the cemetery and proceeded towards south to bring the dead body hanging in a tree. To his surprise, however, a vampire who, had already taken possession of the corpse, revealed to the king that the evil ascetic would cut off the head of the king and present it to the Vetāla at the end of the rite. So, when the rite was over, under the instructions of the vampire, the king outwitted the ascetic and put him to death. Gods appeared on the spot, presented a sword to the king and blessed him that he would be a paramount ruler.

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[82] *Nalachampū*, I, 14, De and Dasgupta, *HSL*, pp. 230-31.

[83] *Kathāsaritsāgara*, Ed. Durgadas and Parab, NSP, Bombay, 1889, X, 3. *Bṛihatkathāmañjarī*, Ed. Sivadatta and Parab, NSP, Bombay, 1901, XVI, 185f.

[84] For the views of Hertel and Edgerton, *HSL*, p. 421, n., and Emeneau: Kshemendra as Kavi, *JAOS*, LIII, 1933, p. 127.

Both the Pushyabhūti episode and the Vampire legend centre round the story of the propitiation of a vampire by an ascetic. Further, in both the stories the rite of vampire-propitiation required the help of a warrior king. Even the minor details such as the precious presents to the king by the ascetic, the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight for the Vetāla-rite, the black apparel of the king and the present of a sword, and the blessings for paramount rulership to the king, are also similar in both the narratives.

Events and Characters

To the writers of *itihāsa* tradition, history was not just a meaningless succession of events. War and strife, political discord and courtly intrigue were thought to be the superficial expression of life, below which lay the fascinating drama of man's fulfilment of the sovereign purpose of human existence. *Itihāsa* tried to grasp this inner story and to understand the meaning of events in terms of the four-fold aim of life.[85] It is this aim (*phala*) which gives meaning to the whole sequence of events and brings about unity in historical narrative.

In narratives, the achievement of the aim (*phalāgama*) by the hero is always described at the end. It would appear to us that notionally the end is the poet-historian's starting-point from which he works the story back to the beginning. In this reverse process, his endeavour is not so much to develop gradually the consequences of a given initial situation as to arrange antecedent events in such a way that they necessarily culminate into the known outcome. Further, since a man can hardly grasp and describe life in all its multifarious aspects, the historian selects only that series of events through which he can explain the end in question. In this process of selection, he abstracts life and throws the material extracted

[85] See *supra*, p. 43 and fn.

from it in the crucible of his logic in order to construct an intelligible piece of historical narrative. Though the historian preserves the chronological framework, the arrangement of events in a early mediaeval Indian historical narrative thus shows a logical development rather than a historical one. This logical development of theme is shown in five stages—the first the Beginning, the last the End, and the three intervening stages the Efforts, the Hope of Success and the Certainty, which tell the tale of human efforts directed towards the end, through the turmoils of Time and under the dictates of Fate.

The accession of Harsha to the thrones of Thanesar and Kanauj is the end (*phala*) in the *Harshacharita*. Conditioned by it, Bāṇa was obliged to present the antecedent events in a way which would make the accession of Harsha or, in the then current idiom of *itihāsa*, the meeting of Harsha with the Goddess of Royal Fortune, appear inevitable and intelligible in terms of the mediaeval philosophy. The story begins (*prārambha*) at the time of the dynast Pushyabhūti when the Goddess of Royal Fortune gave him her blessings and prophesied that he would initiate a line in which an imperial ruler Harsha would flourish, over whom she herself would wave the flywhisk.[86] Against the background of the Vetāla-legend of the *Bṛihatkathā*, this Pushyabhūti episode heralds the birth of Harsha as a universal suzerain. The story reaches the second stage of the Efforts when, pleased by his devotions, Sūrya blessed Prabhākara with two sons, and the royal astrologer announced that one of them, Harsha, would be an imperial ruler.[87] Thereafter, the story of the *Harshacharita* moves parallel to that of the *Ratnāvalī*. Adopting the symbolism of the latter, Bāṇa made Rājyaśrī fill the dual rôle of a tender but unfortunate princess married to the Maukharī crown-prince Grahavarman, and of symbolically representing the royal glory inherent in a monarch. In the second capacity, she plays the same part as the Siṁhala princess in the *Ratnāvalī*. In this comedy, the third stage of the Hope

[86] *HC*, p. 169.

[87] *Ibid*, p. 184. For the influence of the *Ratnāvalī* on ancient historical tradition of Java see Dr. F.D.K. Bosche, *The Studies in Indonesian Archaeology*, Hague, 1961, pp. 88 ff. I am indebted to Dr. J. G. de Casparis for this reference.

is reached when, hearing the rumour that Vāsavadattā was burnt alive, the Siṁhala king accepts the proposal of Yaugandharāyaṇa for the marriage of Ratnāvalī and Udayana. But the ship carrying Ratnāvalī from Siṁhala to India is wrecked in mid-ocean. Correspondingly in the *Harshacharita* the death of Prabhākara followed by the murder of Grahavarman and Rājya form the Hope of Harsha's rulership over both kingdoms. The occupation of Kanauj by the Gauḍas and the imprisonment of Rājyaśrī are the two obstacles. The recovery of the Siṁhala princess by Yaugandharāyaṇa in the *Ratnāvalī* and the news that Rājyaśrī was liberated in the *Harshacharita* constitute the feature known as Certainty. As the *Ratnāvalī* ends with the marriage of Udayana and Ratnāvalī,[88] so the meeting of Harsha and Rājyaśrī and the gift of the jewelled necklace (*ratna-avalī*) to Harsha by Divākara indicate the *phalāgama* in the *Harshacharita*.

The five stages in the *Harshacharita* are the Pushyabhūti episode (Beginning), the birth of Harsha (Efforts), the death of Prabhākara followed by the murder of Grahavarman and Rājya (Hope), the liberation of Rājyaśrī (Certainty) and lastly the meeting of Harsha with Rājyaśrī (the Achievement of the Aim). The first two stages—the Beginning and the Efforts—cover the uneventful part of the story whereas the last three—the Hope, the Certainty and the End—tell an exciting tale unusually full of stirring events. In the early part, therefore, the story sluggishly meanders through the thickets of lengthy descriptions, but from the middle it suddenly bursts into great speed, compelling the author to telescope events by skipping over intervening happenings. Since Time is utilized in the sequential aspect and not in the chronological, this creates an impression that the whole series of events from the death of Prabhākara to the meeting of Harsha with Rājyaśrī happened in only a few days.

Further, in the reverse process of constructing the history of the past, the concern of the historian is not so much to bring out the consequences which would inevitably follow if a person with certain given qualities were placed in the initial situation as to divine in his characters those qualities which make the known outcome appear rational and inevitable. Therefore, besides conditioning the treatment of antecedent events, the end (*phalāgama*) also influences the characterization. There is, however, nothing strange in this reverse process. History is a review of the past. Naturally therefore, historians tend to bring out the significance of great occurrences on the basis of their outcome and retrospectively read the importance of grand characters in the light reflected on them by their glorious achievements.

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[88] The *avoloka* commentary on the *Daśarūpaka*, I, 33.

An analysis of the main characters will reveal that Bāṇa intended to explain the accession of Harsha by emphasizing those traits in them which made this outcome appear natural, noble and inevitable. Thus, the only important characteristic in the dynast Pushyabhūti, as described by Bāṇa, is his steadfast devotion to Śiva, which eventually bore fruit in his getting a boon from Lakshmī that Harsha would enjoy imperial status. Except in the introduction, where his martial exploits are recounted, Prabhākara is described only as a very kind father who considered the fulfilment of the aim of his life to have been achieved in the birth of Harsha on whom his "sovereignty, succession, happiness and life depended."[89]

His love for Harsha is vividly described at the time of his last illness. "As soon as the king perceived his darling son while still at some distance, swayed even in that extremity by overpowering affection, he ran forward in spirit to meet him, and putting out his arms, half rose from the couch, calling to him 'come to me, come to me'". In tear-choked accents he could find strength only to say "You are the fruit of stainless deeds, stored up (by me) in many another life. You bear marks declaring the sovereignty of the four oceans, one and all, to be almost in your grasp." He significantly adds, "To such as you, who are born through the merits of a whole people, fathers are merely expedients to bring them into being."[90]

The life of Rājya is likewise reoriented, and so his personality is considerably overshadowed by that of his brother. In building up the greatness of Harsha, Bāṇa was obliged to minimize the importance of Rājya. No special attention is paid to the birth of the first, the greatly longed for child, whereas the event of

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[89] *HC*, p. 220. [90] *HC*, p. 206.

Harsha's birth is described as celebrated with great pomp and show. An astrologer is introduced into the story to predict the future greatness of the child, which naturally reflected adversely on Rājya. The dying father is said to have stated that his "sovereignty and succession" depended on him, but he did not even once mention the name of his eldest son, the crown-prince.

The account of Rājya's battles against the Mālava forces, and his treacherous murder by the Gauḍa king are stated only in the form of short messages received by Harsha. As the purpose of the prose *kāvya* is better served by the delineation of pathos than by an objective narration of the events resulting in the death of Rājya, we get a graphic description of the emotional unrest created in the mind of Harsha rather than a chronicle of military and diplomatic import. In the narrative, Rājya dies unseen, unhonoured and almost unsung.

But it is the character of Rājyaśrī which most suffers diminution. Her symbolic significance overwhelms her historical personality. The tender Maukhari queen is well-nigh lost in the Goddess of Royal Fortune. At some places, she is described as 'the Fortune inherent in a monarch', and at others her name is used suggestively to indicate her symbolic significance. Thus, in the statement of the priest Gambhīra that "Rājyaśrī has at length united the two brilliant lines of Pushyabhūti and Mukhara",[91] the word Rājyaśrī is evidently used in both its meanings, and is so explained by the commentator Śaṁkara. "As now our father is dead" Harsha mused, "Rājyaśrī should flee to a hermitage."[92] Though, here the word *rājaśrī* primarily means 'royal fortune', the passage also alludes to the impending doom of the princess Rājyaśrī, who is described as having taken shelter in the hermitage of Divākara. Towards the conclusion of the narrative, there is a very significant reference to "the bringing of a silvery seal of sovereignty by *rājaśrī* to Harsha."[93] As we have seen elsewhere, Rājyaśrī in the *Harshacharita* plays the same rôle as Ratnāvali in Harsha's comedy and Madanamañjukā in the *Bṛihatkathā*.

Thus Bāṇa has organized the complete scheme of events from the angle of Harsha, his central figure. Harsha is represented as an ideal monarch, a devout son, a loving brother and a noble master. Bāṇa's ideal of a monarch, which may be known from his descriptions of Śūdraka and Tārāpīḍa in the *Kādambarī*, finds its full realization in Harsha. But it is not in the delineation of Harsha as a ruler but in the discerning of those qualities which made him one, that the main endeavour of Bāṇa lies. The most portentous quality, according to him, was that the *rājyaśrī*, which characterizes a monarch, inhered in Harsha. The central theme of the work is intended to prove and illustrate this divine characteristic. Harsha, on his part, was unwilling to accept the royal status but "he was embraced by the goddess of Royal Fortune, who took him in her arms, and seizing him by all the royal marks on his limbs forced him, however reluctant, to mount the throne."[94] Caught in the whirlpool of circumstances, Harsha was forcibly driven to royal status. He however, did not think highly of such a position and prized brotherly affection much more. In fact, Bāṇa described a noble though unusual struggle between the two brothers, not because they wanted the throne of Thanesar for themselves but because, having resolved to become hermits, each of them wanted the other to mount the throne. When Rājya, the rightful heir, offered "the cares of sovereignty—a gift not high-esteemed" to his younger brother, the latter, although he did not openly remonstrate, thought it an atrocious act to accept it. To Harsha, it was "like bidding a Vedic Brāhmaṇa drink wine, a faithful servant outrage his master, a good man have dealings with low, a chaste wife forget her honour."[95] He could not entertain the thought of ruling the earth on Rājya's going to the hermitage, and was prepared to act as "Sumitrā's son Lakshmaṇa, in following the train of his elder brother in silence."[96]

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[91] *Ibid*, p. 236. [92] *Ibid*, p. 342. [93] *Ibid*, p. 111.

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Harsha displayed a rare affection for Rājyaśrī also. He himself described it in touching words, "I have only one sister left, who is the sole link that keeps up my life, now that I have lost all my beloved kindred." And so when, in the course of his expedition to punish the Gauḍas, he learnt that Rājyaśrī had taken refuge in the Vindhya forest, where all traces of her were lost, he immediately changed his plans. Leaving Bhaṇḍi in charge of the expedition, he himself started out on her search. Eventually he found her just as she was mounting her funeral pyre. So pathetic was her condition, that the affectionate brother could not but think it his paramount duty to console, comfort and look after her. "My sister, so young, so tried by adversity, must be cherished by me for a while, even if it involves the neglect of all my royal duties."[97]

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[94] *Ibid.*, p. 249. [95] *Ibid.*, p. 250. [96] *Ibid.*, p. 339.

In the world of the times where jealousy, greed and ambition rent the soul, a fatricidal war generally preceded the attainment of rulership. But Bāṇa discovered those unusual qualities in Harsha which not only resolve the conflict between brotherly affection and the accession to the throne but which, in fact, make the former serve as an additional fillip to the latter.

The treacherous murder of Rājya on the one side added a pathetic touch to the theme of brotherly affection, but on the other it aroused a fiery martial spirit in Harsha to wreak vengeance on the miscreants. He told Siṁhanāda, "My mind brimming with passion, has no room for complying with the observances of mourning. Nay, so long as this vile outcaste of a Gauḍa king, this world-condemned miscreant, who deserved to be pounded, survives like a cruel thorn in my heart, I am ashamed to cry out helplessly with dry lips like a hermaphrodite."[98] With this, he caused a proclamation to be written announcing his intention of the world-conquest. Thus, Harsha's brotherly affection did not in any way conflict with his attainment of imperial status, but on the other hand, it gave an impetus to it. Likewise when leaving Bhaṇḍi in charge of such an important expedition, Harsha proceeded in person to search for his younger sister in the Vindhya forest, he not only acted as an affectionate brother but also as an astute politician. For, at that juncture, the cooperation of Rājyaśrī was of great importance to Harsha. It was only through the widowed queen, that he could hope to win over the Maukhari nobles and set aside the contending claims of the kinsmen of Grahavarman.

This is the central story. Its analysis has afforded us a glimpse into the various grooves of the mould which shaped the entire series of events into an intricate pattern. Indeed the *Harshacharita* is not merely a chronicle of events. In accordance with the canons of *itihāsa*, it narrates the different happenings in the life of Harsha, synthesized and integrated into a scheme which makes them intelligible only in the context of Harsha's accession to throne, symbolically represented by his meeting with Rājyaśrī. Artistically composed on the pattern of heroic historiography, where the hero appears as an ideal man with a flawless character, it gives history as viewed by the Bhārgave historian through his mediaeval spectacles. Rightly it is adjudged by a contemporary Bhārgava as a second *Mahābhārata*, composed to make the holy race of the Bhṛigus all the more holy by the purificatory rite of its hearing.[99]

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[97] *Ibid.*, p. 263. [98] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Broadly speaking, it is well-knit, compact and homogeneous. Nevertheless, there are a few loose ends in it—the anomalous fragments, that are neither integrated with the core of the story nor required by it. They are more or less the refractory snippets of the central story, loosely strung into it. For example, the speech of Rājya immediately after the death of Prabhākara in no way contributes to the development of the theme. By striking a discordant note, on the other hand, it seriously affects the uniform nature of the story.

This is the only occasion when Rājya occupies the centre of the stage. After his victorious march against the Hūṇas, he returns to the capital to find his father dead. With "long white bandages bound about arrow-wounds received in battle" and with his "form dotted with sideglances from the approaching Royal Glory",[100] he in a full length *darbar* addresses himself thus to Harsha: "My dear brother, your situation invites instructions from your elders. Even as a boy, you held fast to our father's habits of thought." But then, instead of giving instructions to Harsha, he proceeds to confess in a plaintive mood, "It is some cowardice or womanishness which has rendered me subject to the flame of filial grief . . . . All my manhood is melted like a thing of lac by a mighty flame of pain . . . . At the idea of sovereignty, my eyes grow disordered, like the partridge's at poison."

[99] *Ibid.*, p. 245. [100] *Ibid.*, pp. 246-248.

Exhibiting thus an abnormal state of mind, he concludes, "My mind seeks to avoid glory . . . . Therefore, do you receive from my hands, the cares of sovereignty, a gift not high-esteemed indeed, and reft of the joy of the youth. Dismissing all the sports of youth, deliver your bosom like Vishṇu to the embraces of Glory." So speaking, he takes his scimitar from the hand of his sword-bearer and flings it on the earth. This renunciation of the throne and worldly life is not described as a fleeting idea or a diplomatic gesture. It is intended to be taken as a firm resolve because "the weeping keeper of the Robes came forward and provided the bark dresses of the hermit to Rājya, as previously ordered."[101]

Suddenly, however, the scene changes and we find pathos melting before the fiery sentiments of fury and heroism. A distinguished servant of Rājyaśrī precipitates himself into the audience and utters with an effort, "My lord, on the very day on which his Majesty Grahavarman was by the wicked lord of Mālava cut off from the living along with his noble deeds, the princess Rājyaśrī has been confined like a brigand's wife with a pair of iron fetters kissing her feet, and cast into prison at Kānyakubja." "That Mālavas should maltreat the race of Pushyabhūtis!" exclaimed Rājya. He then told Harsha, "My pain has vanished before a more vehement passion. Let all the kings and elephants stay with you. Only Bhaṇḍi must follow me." So speaking, he ordered the marching drum to sound instantly.[102]

The sudden resolve to give up his claim to the throne in order to lead the life of a hermit and the equally sudden determination to abandon the idea of renunciation in order to launch an attack on the evil Mālava king, are described in the story to depict the quick and noble reactions of Rājya to the fast changing circumstances. But the artificiality of the idea of renouncing the throne becomes manifest in the forebodings of Harsha immediately after Prabhākara's death. Harsha is said to have mused, "Pray heaven that my brother, when he learns of our father's death, may not after a bath of tears assume two robes of bark or seek a hermitage as a royal sage . . . . Never may indifference due to the transitoriness of things lead him to slight the advances of sovereign glory."[103]

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[101] *Ibid*, pp. 252-253. [102] *Ibid*, p. 240. [103] *Ibid*, pp. 248-249.

Further, on the throne being offered by Rājya to Harsha in the presence of noblemen and feudatory kings, it is strange that such a pious and dutiful man as Harsha did not openly protest against the atrocious proposal. Even when the Keeper of Robes provided bark robes to Rājya, Harsha stood silent and downcast, reflecting on the demerits of kingship and examining the motives of Rājya in making the royal offer. He mused "Has my lord become angry with me on receiving some vile hint from some envious wretch? Is this a mental aberration born of grief ?" [104]

Similarly, the speech of Prabhākara from his death-bed can in no way be made to square with the central story that Rājya, who had the title to the throne of Thanesar, wanted to give up his claims in favour of Harsha, although no pressure, political or otherwise was exerted on him. Before departing for the next world, Prabhākara is described as having said to Harsha, "To declare that the earth is yours is a vain repetition, when your bodily marks proclaim a universal emperor's dignity. To bid you take to yourself glory is almost contradictory, when glory has herself adopted you. 'Succeed to this world' is a command too mean for an intending conqueror to both worlds. 'Appropriate my treasure' is a grant of little service to one whose sole craving is for the accumulation of fame spotless as moonlight. 'Make prize of the feudatory kings' is almost meaningless, when your virtues have made prize of all beings. "Accept the burden of royalty, is an injunction misbecoming one accustomed to support the burden of the three worlds. 'Protect the people' is but reiteration, when the sky has your long arm for its bar."[105]

This speech of Prabhākara, if it means anything at all, means that he wanted Harsha to succeed him on the throne. In this context, his earlier speech may also be recalled in which he says to Harsha, "Upon you, my happiness, my sovereignty, my succession and my life are set, and as mine, so those of all my people."[106]

It is not a little curious that these anomalous fragments are not isolated and unconnected with each other. When taken together, they form an intelligible pattern.

The speech of Prabhākara which suggests that he proclaimed Harsha to be his successor fits in well with the speech of Rājya,

[104] *Ibid*, pp. 248-249. [105] *Ibid*, p. 233. [106] *Ibid*, p. 220.

who refused to be anointed and expressed his willingness to accept Harsha as the ruler. The silent acquiescence of Harsha to the proposal of Rājya completes a fairly coherent and intelligible picture.

The story which emerges from these discrepancies naturally runs in the opposite direction, cutting across the central tale of the *Harshacharita* at its vital point. If the latter portrays the noble character of Harsha with such an exuberance of pious and affectionate colours that it assumes an aerial nebulosity, the former casts dark shadows of doubt about his intentions towards Rājya. If the central story suggests that there was a noble struggle between Rājya and Harsha, both of whom wanted the other to ascend the throne, the tale of anomalous fragments may be construed to indicate that attempts were made to enthrone Harsha by superseding Rājya.

What is the significance of these discrepancies? Are they the unwelcome and unforeseen outcome of an ambitious desire of Bāṇa to formulate the history and personality of Harsha on so noble a design that a little slip in the construction reflected more adversely on Harsha than he actually deserved? Or alternatively, can they be interpreted as merely the refractory snippets of the central theme which defied all the attempts of the historian to harmonize them with the rest? The evidence, however, scanty and inconclusive is in the favour of the second alternative. Throughout the narrative, Bāṇa seems to have waged a running fight against Rājya. One can understand the limitations of the author who ignored the early life of Rājya but who painted the birth and early childhood of Harsha in gay and gladdening colours. One can even bring oneself to believe in the correctness of the account of the overpowering affection of Prabhākara towards Harsha, to the exclusion of Rājya. But the author outsteps all bounds, when he neglects to mention the accession of Rājya to the throne of Thanesar. The little epigraphic evidence gives a clear verdict against this part of Bāṇa's story.

Anyway, in order to construct a stereoscopic version of this drama, one has to understand the implications of both the central tale and the story of discrepancies.

CHAPTER III

THE VIKRAMĀṄKADEVACHARITA OF BILHAṆA

IN THE colourful township of Khonamukha (modern Khonmuh[1] 75·1° W. 34·3° N.) which is situated at the foot of the snow-capped Himālayas and surrounded by saffron fields of pink hue on one side and green vine-yards on the other, Bilhaṇa was born in c.1040. His father Jyeshṭha-kalaśa belonged to a family of the mid-land Brāhmaṇas,[2] who quite a few centuries before immigrated to this "coquettishly embellished bosom of the snowy mountain". Bilhaṇa does not explicitly mention their sub-caste. But since all the Brāhmaṇas of the Kāśmīraka division consider themselves a branch of the Sārasvatas,[3] and since in his autobiographical sketch, Bilhaṇa pays a glowing tribute to the Sārasvatas[4] of his homeland, it is all but certain that he himself was a Sārasvata of Kauśika *gotra*.[5]

In the Early Mediaeval period, there were, broadly speaking, three classes of Brāhmaṇas in Kashmir. The first and politically the most influential class comprised those scholars and poets who were either attached to the royal court or assigned administrative duties. Kalhaṇa picturesquely describes these scholarly Brāhmaṇas "who were granted great fortunes and high honours and who used to go to the court of Avantivarman (855/6—883), in vehicles worthy of kings."[6] Not only the greatest Kashmirian philosopher of all ages. Ānandavardhana, but also such famous poets as Muktākaṇa, Ratnākara and Śivasvāmin adorned the royal court in the second half of the ninth century.[7] Maṅkha, who flourished immediately after Bilhaṇa, was the minister of War and Peace under Jayāpīḍa[8] (1128-40). His one brother Alaṁkāra[9] was the superintendent of the Great Treasury, while another brother, Sṛiṅgāra, was a judge.[10] The contemporary designations of administrative posts such as *adhikaraṇa-dvija*, *āsthāna-dvija* and *āsthāna-bhaṭṭa*[11] indicate the association of the Brāhmaṇas with the administration. The second class consisted of the priests of temples and holy places, who had their separate corporations *parishads*.[12] Lastly, there were Brāhmaṇas of *agrahāra* settlements who were mainly devoted to the cultivation of learning and the performance of rituals. The family of Bilhaṇa belonged to the last class. Khonamukha was an ancient *agrahāra* settlement, established, according to a tradition, by the legendary king Khagendra.[13] The ancestors of Bilhaṇa were pious *agnihotrins*. His father was a grammarian of some distinction,[14] and his brothers poets of considerable talent.[15] He himself is described as having studied in his home-town all the *śāstras*, notably grammar, poetics and the Vedas with their ancillary disciplines.[16] Since his childhood days, however, he had a flair for writing poetry. The jingle of Sarasvatī's bangles echoed in the expressions of the precocious child.

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[1] *VDC*, XVIII, 72; *Rājataraṅgiṇī* I. 90; Printed editions of *VDC* spell the word as Khonamukha but *contra Rājataraṅgiṇī* which mentions it as Khonamusha. See Bühler, *Detailed Report of Tour in Search of Sanskrit Mss.*, (*JBBRAS*) 1877, Bombay, p. 6; Stein: Translation of *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṅgiṇī*, I, 16 n.; II, 458.

[2] *VDC*, XVIII, 73. Gopāditya who is described as having brought these Brāhmaṇas from mid-land was an ancient king of the Gonandīya dynasty (*Rājat.*, ii, 145) [3] Bühler's *Report*, p. 19.

[4] *VDC*, XVIII, 6, *Karṇasundarī*, I, 10. [5] *VDC*, XVIII, 73.

[6] *Rājat.*, V. 33. [7] *Ibid*, VV. 33-35.

During the last half of the 11th century, peace in Kashmir was rudely disturbed, firstly by a series of reckless invasions of the neighbouring kingdoms by Ananta, and then by interminable quarrels between royal fathers and sons. Thus, finding no chance of receiving royal patronage in Kashmir, in the early years of his youth Bilhaṇa left his native land after, but not long after, 1063[17] in search of fame and fortune. Travelling south-east he reached Mathurā, where he successfully tried his mettle in discussions against scholars of the region. At Vṛindāvana, hallowed with the divinely sweet memories of Rādhā and Kṛishṇa, he stayed for some time. Then, passing by Kanauj, he went to Prayāga and Vārāṇasī. It was probably at the last place that he met Lakshmī-Karṇa, the king of Ḍāhala. At Karṇa's jewelled palace, Bilhaṇa won fresh laurels by defeating the poet Gaṅgādhara. But still he failed to find royal patronage and before 1073[18] he left Ḍāhala. By passing Dhārā, he reached Somnath. Then he again made a bid to secure a place in the Chaulukya court as a poet. In c. 1073[19], he composed the *Karṇa-sundarī*, in which he described the romantic episode of the marriage of Karṇa Chaulukya (1066/67-93) with a Śilāhāra princess. But, frustrated and bitterly disappointed,[20] he resumed his southward march, visiting courts and holy places. On his way back from Rāmeśvara, at long last fortune smiled on him at the Chālukya capital Kalyāṇa, where Vikramāditya appointed him *Vidyāpati*.

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[8] *Rājat.*, VIII, 3354.

[9] *Rājat.*, 2423; 2557, 2618, 2671 etc. See also VIII, 3353 where Kalhaṇa *Śrīkaṇṭhacharita*, iii, 56-62; XXV, 35-61. mentions Maṅkha as his brother. See Bühler's *Report*, p. 52.

[10] *Rājat.*, VIII, 2422; *Śrīkaṇṭhacharita*, iii, 45-51.

[11] *Rajat.*, VIII, 1620. VII, 85-86.

[12] *Ibid*, I, 87; V, 171.

[13] *Rājat.*, I. 90.

[14] *VDC*, XVIII, 79.

[15] *Ibid*, XVIII, 84-85.

[16] *Ibid*, XVIII, 81-82.

[17] Bilhaṇa left Kashmir in the reign-period of Kalaśa who became king in 1063.

Kashmir had a very strong tradition of *itihāsa*. But it seems that the works of *itihāsa* in Kashmir—the books of Chhavillakāra and Padmamihira, the *Pārthivāvalī* of Helārāja and the *Nṛipāvalī* of Kshemendra—were in the nature of the chronicles and king-lists. Indeed, they were a continuation of the *vaṁśa* tradition and were considerably different in style from the mid-land school of *itihāsa*, started by Bāṇa. Bilhaṇa does not evince any influence of the Kashmir tradition. Both his available works were composed in the mid-land style of historical narratives.

Bilhaṇa as a Defence Counsel

The ancient *itihāsa-ākhyāna* tradition assumed a different complexion when it was brought to the service of the new warrior class of the Rajputs, which was extremely conscious of its position and duties. As the *homo novus* over-emphasizes his position in order to compensate for his inferiority, the newly arisen aristocracy tended to identify itself with the best traditions of ancient *kshatriya* order. In historiography, this tendency is reflected in the anachronistic representation of contemporary Rajput princes in the role of olden heroes of ancient aristocracies.[21] Thus, the Kannaḍa poet Ranna portrayed his patron Satyāśraya Chālukya (A.D. 997-A.D. 1008) in the rôle of Bhīma, the Pāṇḍava hero. Someśvara I Āhavamalla was celebrated as Rāma in historical narratives (*ākhyāyikās*), tales and dramas.[22] The same tendency is reflected in inscriptions, where Vikramāditya VI, the patron of Bilhaṇa, was styled 'Chālukya Rāma'.[23] Bilhaṇa, who hailed from Kashmir, adopted in the earlier part of the epic the direct method of historical narration, as employed in the mediaeval chronicles of Kashmir.[24] But even here, as elsewhere in the mediaeval epics of the country, we find a self-conscious attempt of the new nobility to do something extraordinary and unnatural, to distinguish itself from the rest of its kind and to align itself to the heroic tradition of yore. This nostalgic tendency towards the sentimental heroism and chivalry of ancient times, found its expression in Bilhaṇa who gave an unreal personality to his hero by describing in epic style the *digvijaya*[25] of Vikrama and his selection in the *svayaṁvara*[26] of fair Chandralekhā to the bitter disappointment of rival kings.

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[18] Because the earliest known date of Yaśaḥ karṇa, the successor of Lakshmī-karṇa is 1073 (*EI*, XII, p. 206, but *contra*, CII, IV, 291 but See *ibid*, *intr*. CII). [19] A. K. Majumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujrat*, p. 63.

[20] His disappointment is evident from his vehement condemnation of Gujarati manners (*VDC*, XVIII, 97) and from the fact that in his autobiographical sketch, he did not care to mention his association with the Chalukyan court.

Secondly, the culture during this period was immensely influenced by the court organization. There was an intrinsic unity between princes, pontiffs, *dharmaśāstra* writers, poets, bards and courtiers. We have seen elsewhere, how the religious pontiffs assumed the imperial designation of 'the great king, the king of kings, *Paramabhaṭṭāraka*'. In several royal courts, the tradition of accepting Hindu ascetics as spiritual preceptors continued for centuries in uninterrupted successions, the disciple of the former preceptor invariably taking the place of his master.[27] Lakshmīdhara (c.A.D. 1100), the author of the famous *Kṛitya Kalpataru*, a digest of *dharmaśāstra*, was the minister for war and peace in the court of Gavindachandra Gahaḍavāla. Vijñāneśvara, the foremost commentator on the *Yājñavalkya Smṛiti*, was a minister of Vikramāditya VI. Vallāla of the Sena dynasty and Aparārka of Śilāhāra house were royal authors who made significant contributions to *dharmaśāstra*; there were numerous others whom it is needless to mention. Bards are met in almost all courts,[28] and poets had become necessary members of even the modest courts of feudatories and petty chieftains.

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[21] See also the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* which mentions Pṛithvīrāja III Chāhamāna as the incarnation of the Ikshvāku king Rāma. Hemachandra also represents Siddharāja, the Solaṅkī ruler as Rāma before whom Vibhīshaṇa, the king of Laṅkā, appeared and disclosed that the latter was his servant in his previous birth. (*DV*, *XV*, vv. 56-57; *Chaulukyas of Gujrat*, 409)

[22] *ākhyāyikā-sīmni kathādbhuteshu yaḥ sargabandhe daśarūpake cha pavitra-chāritratayā kavīndrairāropito Rāma ivadvitīyaḥ*, *VDC*, I, 88. See also *VDC*, III, vv. 62, 77.

[23] *EI*, XV, 349, v. 20; EC. VII. Sk. 297.

[24] He, however, adopts the usual pattern of a king's marriage with the princess destined to be the consort of an imperial suzerain in his drama *Karṇa-Sundarī* composed by him at Anahilapāṭaka during the reign of the Solaṅkī ruler Karṇa I.

[25] See *infra* pp. 124-134.

[26] See *infra* pp. 127-131.

These scholars and poets of the court, praised their royal patrons and justified their actions. Princes were the source of their inspiration and the basis of their existence In turn, the poets became the instruments of princely propaganda. With unblushing frankness, Bilhaṇa in the last verse but one of the *Vikramāṅkadevacharita* advises kings to cultivate friendship with poets, as unsullied fame could emerge only through their favour. "When pleased" he adds, "they composed a long biography of virtuous Rāma and when angered they brought Rāvaṇa, the conqueror of the three worlds, to ridicule".[29] "If Rāvaṇa has faded into insignificance and Rāma is exalted in glory, it is because of Vālmīki who composed the life of Rāma."[30] Not only the poet Bilhaṇa but also his contemporary, the most prominent *dharmaśāstra* writer of the early mediaeval period Vijñāneśvara praises, the king Vikramāditya VI in spite of his faults: "On the surface of the earth, there was not, there is not, and there will not be, a town like Kalyāṇa; never was a monarch like the prosperous Vikramāṅka seen or heard of;" and in the true spirit of the age he praises himself: "and what is more—Vijñāneśvara, the Paṇḍita, does not bear any comparison with any other. May this triad which is a celestial creeper exist to the end of the Kalpa."[31] Likewise Someśvara Bhaṭṭa, a learned and eminent Ṛigvedi Brāhmaṇa of the Mauna *gotra* holding the post of a *dharmaśāstra-kārin* or chief superintendent of religious affairs and later on raised to the rank of High Minister with all the tokens of royalty, sets up an inscription which defends the fratricidal action of Vikramāditya VI. The inscription records that the kingdom enjoyed by Someśvara II Bhuvanaikamalla was given to him by his father Someśvara I and that he at first followed the right course, which inspired dread in hostile kings and gave delight to his adherents. "But later on" the inscription proceeds to tell us, "Someśvara II Bhuvanaikamalla became neglectful of his subjects' burdens because of his being infatuated by pride, and therefore his younger brother, who was righteous of soul, put him under restraint."[32]

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[27] V. S. Pathak, *Śaiva Cults in Northern India*, Varanasi, 1960, pp. 46-50.
[28] *VDC*, XVIII, v. 107. [29] *VDC*, XVIII, v. 107.
[30] *Ibid*, I, v, 27, see also I, 26; XVIII, 106.

Therefore, the court-poet Bilhaṇa, although he hailed from Kashmir, did not share the concept of a chronicler's duty with the Kashmirian poets, especially Kalhaṇa for whom the judge who extols virtues and condemns vices was the ideal.[33] Because of his association with the court he evidently takes the role of a defence counsel and, as we shall see, there was a reason for him to assume it.

The *Vikramāṅkadevacharita* was composed when Kalaśa (1080-1088) was ruling in Kashmir and Harsha, his son and successor, was merely a prince.[34] The last important incident mentioned by Bilhaṇa in his royal biography is the chastisement of Jayasiṁha II, the recalcitrant heir-apparent, by the king Vikramāditya VI.[35] As Harsha succeeded Kalaśa in A.D. 1089[36] and the last date known of Jayasiṁha as the heir-apparent is December 25, 1082,[37] the work must have been composed between 1083-1089.

This period marks a turning point in the career of Vikramāditya VI. The removal of Jayasiṁha II from the position of heir-apparent in 1082—is the final act of the plan of Vikramāditya VI which started with the latter's attainment of the status of a heir-apparent with the help of the Cholas in 1068. Subsequent events—the unlawful usurpation of the Chālukya throne, the imprisonment (and probably the execution) of the elder brother Someśvara II Bhuvanaikamalla, and lastly the declaration of Jayasiṁha as *persona non grata* to secure the throne for his son Mallikārjuna, were the acts which made the position of Vikramāditya VI strong and secure, but which reflected adversely on him as a man. Thereafter, however, Vikramāditya VI reigned peacefully. He patronized art, poetry and religion.

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[31] *Mitāksharā.* [32] *EI*, XV, 349. [33] *Rājat.*, I, 7.
[34] *VDC*, XVIII, v. 64. [35] *Ibid*, canto XIV—XV.
[36] *Rājat.*, VII, 723. [37] *BKI*, I, pt. II, No. 127, p. 146.

Bilhaṇa as the court-poet had the responsibility of defending the course of action taken by the king, in order to convince the educated *elite* of his righteousness and to mobilize public opinion in favour of the reigning monarch. Bilhaṇa was eminently successful in his work of removing the blots from the fame of Vikrama which comes to us so resoundingly through the *Vikramāṅkadevacharita*.

Stray attempts to justify the action of Vikrama, were made by panegyrists in inscriptions. Bilhaṇa, however, constructs a detailed and forceful plea in his patron's defence, which may be analyzed in four sections representing the four stages in its development:

1. That Vikramāditya was destined by fate to succeed his father on the Chālukya throne,
2. that Vikramāditya was favoured and selected by his father for succession but the former magnanimously declined the offer;
3. that Vikramāditya had to dethrone the cruel and vicious Someśvara II for the general weal and welfare and to save the fair fame of the Chālukyas from being sullied by his atrocious acts;
4. that Vikrama reluctantly ascended the throne under the express command of Śiva, who appeared before him in a dream.

Pre-ordination for Kingship

To represent that Vikramāditya VI was pre-ordained by destiny to be a powerful ruler, Bilhaṇa weaves a story. According to him, Someśvara I Āhavamalla was tormented by a keen desire to obtain a son. The Goddess of the Royal Fortune (*Śrī*) of the Chālukyas, who had come to him in direct succession from his ancestors, was often fluttering like a bird on the mast of a ship sailing in the mid-ocean, for want of one under whom she could take repose after him.[38] He, therefore, left the state to the care of ministers and retired with his wife to a Śiva temple, where they slept on the bare ground, performed severe austerities and gave themselves up to devotional practices. One day when the king was offering morning prayers he heard a divine voice: "O King! your wife shall give birth to three sons. The first and the last will be born by virtue of thy meritorious works, but the second will come to thee by my favour alone. He shall surpass in valour and virtues all the princes of olden times and like Rāma, shall bring back the goddess of royal glory from beyond the seas."[39]

In due course, the first son was born, but the king was not satisfied. Remembering the prediction of the heavenly voice, he anxiously waited for the birth of his second son. At last the queen again became pale. In the expectation of the eagerly desired son blessed by Lord Śiva, the king did all that he could do. He showered wealth on the Brahmaṇas and made several thank-offerings. The queen had strange cravings which presaged the future greatness of the child. In a very auspicious hour and under an extraordinarily favourable conjunction of planets, Vikrama was born. Flowers fell from the sky. Indra's drum resounded.[40]

Facts gleaned from inscriptions, however, give the lie to the plea of Bilhaṇa. The whole episode of Someśvara I Āhavamalla's penances and the consequent birth of the three sons is a figment of poetic imagination. As early as December 24, 1049, Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Someśvara II Bhuvanaikamalla was a governor of Beḷvola and Purigeṛe divisions—a position he held at least up to 1054,[41] and in 1055 Vikramāditya VI was in charge of Gangavāḍi.[42] Still earlier, a Chola inscription set up in the 27th regnal year of Rājādhirāja (1045) makes a reference to Vikki (i.e. Vikramāditya VI), the brave warrior who fled away when the irresistible Chola forces advanced and vanquished the Chālukya army.[43] Vikramāditya VI and his brother Someśvara II, therefore, must have been born before 1030, more than a decade before Someśvara I Āhavamalla ascended the Chālukyan throne in 1042. This fictitious episode was obviously introduced by the poet to present his hero Vikramāditya VI as specially favoured by Lord Śiva to succeed Someśvara I. Similar stories are found in the *Harshacharita*[44] and *Dvayāśraya*[45] where Harsha and Siddharāja are described as born from the blessings respectively of Sūrya and Lakshmī.

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[38] *VDC*, II 31. [39] *VDC*, Canto II, [40] *Ibid*, II, 59-91.
[41] *EI*, XVI, 53 f; *BKI*, I, 84, 90. [42] *EI*, XIII, 168 ff.
[43] *EHD*, 334-335; *SII*, III, p. 56.

Offer of Heir-apparency and its Refusal

Bilhaṇa next introduces the story of Vikrama's magnanimous refusal of the status of heir-apparent offered by Someśvara I Āhavamalla. According to Bilhaṇa, Āhavamalla thought of designating the more valiant and virtuous, but unfortunately the younger, son Vikramāditya as his heir-apparent. The latter, however, politely yet firmly declined the offer. Neither Śiva's blessings nor astrologers' predictions could induce him to accept the status of an heir-apparent, which rightly belonged to his elder brother. And so Someśvara II Bhuvanaikamalla was eventually anointed as a *yuvarāja*, but the burden of duties and responsibilities rested on the shoulders of Vikramāditya VI.[46]

It is very difficult to check the historicity of the episode. In favour of Bilhaṇa's account may be cited those Chola records which, though they make several references to the valiant Vikramāditya VI as fighting against the Cholas in the lifetime of his father,[47] do not at all mention Someśvara II as participating in the Chola-Chālukya wars. But this may be due to the fact that Vikramāditya VI was a governor of Gangavāḍī—an area subjected to constant military pressure by Chola forces, whereas Someśvara II, being heir-apparent, was assigned the governorship of Beḷvola-Purigeṛe provinces—far away from the Chola borders.

On the other hand, inscriptional data recording the administrative assignments to princes during the reign-period of Someśvara I Āhavamalla, cast grave doubts on Bilhaṇa's account. Thus, Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Śobhanarasa was governing the provinces of

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[44] *HC*, canto IV. [45] *DV*, X, vv. 1-90. [46] *VDC*, III, 27—IV, 1.
[47] *SII*, III, p. 37.

Beḷvola-Puligeṛe with the status of a *Yuvarāja* and the title of the 'Lord of Veṅgī' in 1044.[48] Someśvara II succeeded him as an heir-apparent and a governor of Beḷvola-Puligeṛe in 1049.[49] At that time, Vikramāditya VI was not holding any important administrative post. He was assigned the responsible office of the governorship of Gangavāḍi and Banavāsī six years later in 1055.[50] Two years later Noḷambavādī was added to the list of provinces under his jurisdiction.[51]

Further, inscriptions of Vikramāditya VI, which denounce Someśvara II justify the former in his usurpation of the throne,[52] make no reference to this offer of heir-apparency—a very important argument for justifying supersession.

Bühler may, therefore, be right in his view that "this part of the narrative of Vikrama's life, also, which strongly puts forward his fitness for the throne and his generosity to the less able Someśvara, looks as if it had been touched up in order to whitewash Vikrama's character and to blacken that of his enemy."[53] In this connection one may recall here the death-bed speech of Someśvara I Āhavamalla which expressly attributes the bestowal of heir-apparency on Someśvara to the laudable generosity of Vikramāditya VI. The dying king addresses the ministers saying:[54]
'I can boast of a son like Rāma, mighty with the sword and bow,
'Vikramānka famed for conquest, over himself and o'er the foe:
'Who has freely to his brother yielded up Kalyāṇa's throne,
'Made Someśvara bear the burden which my feeble hands disown.'

Wickedness of Someśvara II Bhuvanaikamalla

Further, Bilhaṇa recounts the atrocious acts of Someśvara II, who threatened the life of Vikramāditya VI. After the accession of Someśvara II, both brothers lived for some time in concord and happiness. Although superior in virtues, Vikramāditya recognized Someśvara II as the chief of the house. He made over to the king the spoils he had won in the wars. But Someśvara II, after he had enjoyed sovereignty for some time, fell into evil courses. He alienated all good persons by his suspicious, cruel and avaricious nature. Kissed by the she-goblin of kingship, he hankered after the blood of all persons indiscriminately. With prosperity lost, the Royal Glory of the Chālukyas under him appeared like a married lady in the garb of a widow, with the fluttering tresses of her hair tonsured, even in the lifetime of her husband.[55] The fair fame of the Chālukyas was sullied.

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[48] *EC*, VII, S. 323. [49] *EI*, XVI, 53f.; *BKI*, I. I. 84 and 90.

[50] *EI*, XIII, 168f., BK. 69 of 1936; *SII*. IX. I. 118; *EC*, VII, Sk. 83, 152.

[51] *EHD*, I, 355. [52] *EI*, XVI, 349 and [53] *VDC*, Intr. 31 n.

[54] *IA*, V, pp. 326-332.

Vikramāditya VI, therefore, left the capital and went to the south with his younger brother Jayasimha. On his southward march, he received tribute from Jayakeśin of Koṅkaṇa and an unnamed lord of Alūpa. The Chola king, fearing an attack from him, hastened with a proposal of friendship cemented by matrimonial alliance. But to save face, however, the Chola monarch stipulated that the marriage should be performed on the banks of the Tungabhadrā in the heart of the Chālukya territory.

After some time, the Chola king, the father-in-law, expired and Vikramāditya VI went to quell the rebellion and to place his wife's brother on Chola throne. But when, after a month's stay at Kāñchī, he returned back to the Tungabhadrā, he learnt that his brother-in-law had lost his life in a rebellion and that Rājiga Chola, the ruler of Veṅgi, had usurped the throne. Vikramāditya marched towards the Chola kingdom in order to chastise the usurper. The latter, made common cause with Someśvara II who saw in this alliance an opportunity to harm his younger brother. The prospect of a fratricidal war distressed the virtuous Vikramāditya, and therefore he sent friendly messages to his brother for reconciliation. Someśvara II pretended to accept the advances of his younger brother only in order to strike a decisive blow at an opportune time. When Vikramāditya VI learnt of these treacherous designs, he felt reluctant but, at the express command of Śiva who appeared in dreams, he proceeded and gave a fierce battle. The Chola king fled away and Someśvara II was put in prison.[56]

Now, the allegations that Someśvara II was cruel, avaricious and treacherous, that he neglected his duties towards the people, and that he unnecessarily harboured evil designs against his younger brother Vikramāditya VI, can hardly be upheld. Inscriptions of the reign of Someśvara II, pay a high tribute to his noble character. "With the accession of Someśvara II", an inscription states, "victory was brought to *dharma*, religious associations to the good, the earth was made happy and the *kṛita* age appeared to have dawned."[57] Even most of the records belonging to the reign of Vikramāditya VI extol Someśvara Bhuvanaikamalla's rule and conduct. As late as 1114, an inscription from Shikarpur records that the rule of Someśvara II was "praised by all the world."[58] An epigraph of Permāḍideva I, the Sinda feudatory chief of Vikramāditya VI runs as follows: "After that king, his son Someśvara—who was ardently devoted to sovereignty, who was well capable of sustaining the burden of earth, who was celebrated for his statesmanship which was illumined by the wisdom of a tortoise, united with the four means of attaining success, and who was formidable by reason of being endowed with fierce valour—was glorious under the name of Bhuvanaikamalla, being the best among celebrated men and heroes."[59] That he repaired some of the ravanges wrought by the Chola invasion to the temples of Beḷvola, is known from the inscriptions of Annigere and Gavawad.[60] He was even "dear to the world of poets."[61]

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[55] *VDC*, IV, 97-113. [56] *VDC*, canto 3 W. 27-77; cantos IV – VI.

On the fratricidal war, epigraphical data give a clear verdict against Vikramāditya VI.[62] There is definite evidence that Vikramāditya VI, who was assigned the very responsible office of the

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[57] *EC*, VII, I, 102. [58] *EC*, VII, I, p. 104. [59] *JBRAS*, XI, 231.

[60] *EI*, XV. 337 f; 347-48. [61] *EC*. XI Dg. 1

[62] Allegations against the dethroned king by the accusing usurper should be accepted only with reservations. Sometimes even later rulers, who usurp the throne of rightful kings, cited earlier cases to justify their own acts and in doing so they give a twist to earlier historical facts. The case of the deposition of Govinda II is quite instructive. It was regularly cited by later rulers in the Rāshtrakūṭa history and so the case gradually developed. Dhruva in his lifetime never openly stated that he superseded his elder brother. A record of the last year of his reign contains a statement that Dhruva out of regard for elders assumed the burden of administration as the earlier ruler who failed to give a lead was deserted by his feudatory allies and thus the very

(*Footnote continued next page*)

governorship of Gangavāḍi, with the highest rank in kingdom only below the king, fomented internal dissensions and invited foreign invasion. Some time between August 15, 1068 A.D. and December 24, 1069 A.D., Vikramāditya VI formed an alliance with the sworn enemy of the house, Vīra Rājendra Chola, and instigated him to invade Chālukya territory. The Chola king is reported to have invested Vikramāditya VI with the necklet (*Kaṇṭhikā*) of rulership over Rattapadi.[63] For sometime he assumed independence and issued royal edicts with imperial titles. With Jayasiṃha III,[64] the governor of Noḷamba-Sindavāḍi and the feudatory chieftains—Jayakeśin I of Goa,[65] Seuṇachandra II the Yādava ruler,[66] Ereyanga Hoysāla[67] and probably Rāya Pāṇḍya[68]—he formed an internal group against the king. Probably in 1071, he tried to sabotage the Chālukyan administration.[69] Thus, he almost forced his elder brother to form an alliance with Kulottuṅga Chola which ultimately resulted in the dethronement of Someśvara II.

(*Footnote* 62 *Continued from previous page*)

existence of the house of the Rāshtrakūṭas was threatened. (*EI*, IX, 1934) Govinda III who had superseded his elder brother, in the very first year of his reign came out with the statement that Dhruva had superseded (by dethroning) Govinda II but thereby Dhruva did not incur any sin as Govinda II was a wicked ruler associated with vicious persons. (*IA*, IV, 65) The case further developed after a century and a half. Amoghavarsha II and Kṛishṇa III had dethroned the licentious ruler, Govinda IV, who is reported to have committed incest. Kṛishṇa III for the first time records that Govinda II was deposed as "sensual pleasures had made him careless of the kingdom [and thus] he allowed his position as a sovereign insecure." (*JBBRAS*, XVIII, v. 11). In the accusation of Govinda II, Kṛishṇa III probably justifies the dethronement of the immoral Govinda IV. The allegation of "sensual pleasure" and "the consequent weakening of the Rāshtrakūṭa power" is certainly true in the case of Govinda IV but is unwarranted in the case Govinda II. (see also *Karahad CP of Karka*, IA, XII 263ff. L. 8) 3. *Ibid.*, VII, Sk. 136.

[63] *EI*, XXV, 265.

[64] *EHD*, I, 310ff., *EG*, VII, Sk. 136; *SII*, IX, 114; 115.

[65] Narendra Inscription, *EI*, III, 298ff.

[66] Introduction to Memādrī's *Vratakhaṇḍa*, v. 29, *BG*, I, II, 271.

[67] *EC*, V, Ar. 102. [68] *SII*, IX, 140. [69] *EHD*. I, 310ff.

Commands of Śiva

Lastly, Bilhaṇa brings in the divine agency of Śiva's commands to defend his patron from the charge of violating the principle of primogeniture. When the prospect of a fratricidal war had made Vikramāditya VI reluctant to encounter the combined army of the Cholas and the Chālukyas, Bilhaṇa narrates, that Śiva appeared before Vikramāditya VI in a dream and commanded him, "O child! You are my virtuous incarnation and, therefore, it is surprising that you are having such mental oscillation. Don't you remember that you are born to destroy evil doers? By annihilating the enemies, therefore, may your strung bow be a cause of jubilation for the whole world."[70]

Later again, the heavenly voice of Śiva angrily[71] commanded Vikrama to keep Someśvara II in prison.

Significance of the Defence Plea

In order to justify the course of action taken by his patron, Bilhaṇa advances the plea of the unseen cause in the form of pre-ordination by the will of God, and of the current political conventions. Actions in the past life bear fruition in the form of destiny, which conditions the circumstances, determines happiness and misery in the present life, and, in this way, fetters human freedom of action. According to the Mīmāṁsakas. human actions create a desert (*apūrva*), which in due course, bears fruit without any external agency. But the followers of the Nyāya and Vaiśeshika schools believe that god in the form of Īśvara-śiva dispenses the fruits of actions.[72]

They also believe in the pre-ordination of the course of human life through divine grace. Thus, according to a contemporary inscription, set up by a logician of the Śaiva Siddhānta school, it is through the grace of God that a man obtains birth in a royal family worldly pleasures, learning, right thinking, beautiful physique and victories in war.[73] Further, in this period, kings were regarded as divine, and gods were invested with kingship. A tradition runs that Solaṅkī chief had given the whole of the Mālava province as a present to the god Mahākāleśvara of Ujjain.[74] Avantivarman of the Mattamayūra region, and a Kalachuri king of Ḍāhala presented their kingdoms to the pontiffs of Śaiva Siddhānta school.[75] In Kalachuri inscriptions, a Śaiva ascetic is styled "King, the Great King of Kings, Lord Vāmadeva."[76] Lastly, the idea gained currency that for the fulfilment of a specific purpose, some of the divine powers of Śiva manifest themselves in a man. An inscription from Somanātha-Prabhāsa describes Viśveśvara-rāśī as the partial incarnation of Lord Śiva.[77]

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[70] *VDC*, VI, 62-65. [71] *Ibid*, VI, 93.

[72] *Kusumāñjalī*, I, 4; S. C. Vidyabhushan, *A History of Indian Logic*, Calcutta, 1921, p. 143.

[73] *EI*, I, 261, verse 75.

Using these ideas of the Śaivas—the pre-ordination of the course of human life through the grace of Śiva, the divinity of kings, the partial incarnation of Śiva, and divine instructions received in dreams—, Bilhaṇa makes out that Lord Śiva in his infinite grace pre-ordained Vikramāditya VI to become a mighty ruler for destroying evil doers. On the same basis, he further develops the theme to show that Vikramāditya received instructions from Śiva for proceeding against his elder brother in battle, and violating the principle of primogeniture by dethroning the elder brother and ascending the Chālukyan throne. The divine causation in the form of pre-ordination, the divine character as a partial incarnation, and the divine commands to action, place the hero and his deeds high above human criticism and censure.

In support of his case, Bilhaṇa further brings in the current political conventions–the wish of the ruling father, and the wickedness of Someśvara II.

Earlier works–the two great epics,[78] the *Nirukta*[79] and the *Arthaṣāstra*[80]–, maintained that except under a crisis, the law of primogeniture was inviolable. Some mediaeval texts, however, regard it as merely recommendatory. In the *Kṛitya-kalpataru*, Lakshmīdhara (c. 1110), the Gahaḍavāla minister for peace and war, implies that for the succession to the throne, a younger but more qualified son should be preferred to an unmeritorious, though elder one.[81] Having recourse to this discretionary power, mediaeval kings some times set aside the law of primogeniture and anointed younger sons as *yuvarāja*. Overriding the claim of the eldest son, Dhruva Rāshtrakūṭa had invested his third son Govinda with the necklet of heir-apparency. But this unusual practice met with popular discontent and Dhruva had to abdicate the throne in order to set the new government of Govinda III secure in the saddle.[82]

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[74] *Prabandhachintāmaṇī*, p. 11. [75] *EI*, I, 355, v. 13; *JAHRS*, IV, 147 ff.

[76] *EI*, II, 305 ff; XII, 210; XXXI, 116; *IA*, XVII, 246 ff. See also *JUPHS*, 1952, 227 but *contra* M. M. V. V. Mirashi, *CII*, IV, *Intro.* LXVII.

[77] *Bhavanagar Inscriptions*, 209-10, vv. 18-19.

[78] *Rāmāyaṇa*, II, 110, 36; *Mahābhārata*, I, 85, 22. [79] II, 10.

[80] XII, 1, 17.

Thus, even in the mediaeval period, the supersession of the eldest brother was generally disliked. "Never was the eldest brother overriden" in the ideal state portrayed by Bāṇa in the *Kādambarī*.[83] For Bilhaṇa, the supersession was a glaring violation of customary laws and it necessarily entailed sin.[84] His ideal was Bharata who firmly declined the offer of the throne which rightfull belonged to his elder brother Rāma.[85] That such feelings were commonly shared by people at large is known from the *Silāpattikāraṁ*, which describes the story of the Chera prince Iḷaṅko vāḍigal, who thought it easier to renounce all the comforts of the worldly life by becoming a monk than to commit the sin of usurping the elder brother's throne.

Thus, an offer of the throne made by the royal father to his younger son, although refused at the time, later furnishes a plausible excuse for the legitimate supersession of the elder brother. Its refusal, however, lends a halo of epic magnanimity to the personality of the hero.

The main contention of Bilhaṇa rests on the diabolical character of Someśvara II. From very early times, kings were believed as being composed of divine elements. The concept assumed a constitutional significance, when some ancient writers discriminated between good and bad kings, and maintained that virtuous kings were divine, where vicious kings who oppress the subjects and cause the loss of *dharma*, are made up of the parts of demons.

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[81] *Rājadharmakāṇḍa*, *Intr.* p. 28.

[82] Yazdani, *Early History of Deccan*, I, 265.

[83] p. 56; see also *Rājanīti-ratnākara*, p. 70.

[84] *VDC*, III, v. 36.

[85] *Ibid*, III, v. 40.

Bilhaṇa further develops this view. According to him, it is the she-goblin of Royal Fortune, and not Lakshmī, the Goddess of Royal Glory, that attends a vicious king.[86] And here, Bilhaṇa finds the justification for the dethronement of Someśvara II. The virtuous ruler Vikramāditya, in whom, Lakshmī, the Goddess of Royal Fortune, inhered, deserved respect due to a divine personality, whereas Someśvara II, the vicious king, attended by the she-goblin of kingship, merited dethronement and destruction.

Unprincipled Wrangling

The only other political episode dealt in detail by Bilhaṇa is the suppression of the rebellious younger brother Jayasiṁha. In his account of the struggle, Bilhaṇa tries to show the kind and considerate nature of Vikrama in contrast with the rash, haughty and ungrateful disposition of his younger brother. 'A confidential adviser once approached Vikrama in privacy and exhorted him to exert vigilant supervision over the administration. He informed him of the treasonable intentions of Jayasiṁha, the governor of Vanavāsa, who was filling his coffers by oppressing the subjects, raising the strength of his army and making overtures to enemies of the state—the Chola king and the turbulent forest tribes. It was further reported that he would soon march, in defiance of the emperor Vikrama, to the *Kṛishṇaveṇī*. The considerate Vikrama, however, sent spies to ascertain the real state of affairs, and they came in due course and confirmed the report. Dismayed by the prospect of another fraternal war, Vikrama sent friendly messages in order to affect reconciliation with his recalcitrant brother, but mistaking them as the signs of weakness, Jayasiṁha turned them down. Eventually, the latter advanced towards the Krishṇā, where other feudatory kings joined him. Vikrama marched in self-defence and in spite of initial reverses, routed the rebels and, with a large quantity of booty, seized the harem of Jayasiṁha, who was captured on his flight in the jungles.'[87]

Archaeological data, however, do not give such a simple picture. Jayasiṁha, who was a trusted, loyal and active companion of Vikramāditya, helped the latter in his struggle against the elder brother. He was a governor of Taradavāḍi under his father.[88] In the regime of his eldest brother, Trailokyamalla-Nolamba-Pallava-Permāḍi, Jayasiṁhadeva was ruling over Kogaḷi five hundred, Kadambaḷige thousand and Ballakunde three hundred on May 19, 1068, and over Noḷambavāḍi thirty-two thousand and Sindavāḍi thousand on August 15, 1068 A.D., holding the third rank in the kingdom, below only the King, Someśvara II and Vikramāditya VI.[89] But some time after the last date, he relinquished the high position and went with Vikrama to the south.[90] After the accession of the latter to the throne of Kalyāṇī, Jayasiṁha was assigned the governorship of Banavāsī with the status of an heir-apparent.[91] A record of Jayasiṁha dated 1080, proudly describes him as "an abode of modesty, a cherished companion of Vikramāditya's heart, a beloved younger brother who, having won over King Chālukya-Rāma, had mounted up and gained his affection".[92] It was "through the aid of Noḷamba (Jayasiṁha)" that "the seven Konkaṇas became like the bracelet of the emperor Vikramāditya VI".[93] Because of him "Ḍāhala was smoking, Lāḷa was trying to enter the forest, the Cholas tried to run south of Laṅkā, thinking that he will be angry, Koṅkaṇa filled with anxiety."[94] After the king, he was thus, the most influential man in the Chālukyan territory. But suddenly, a few days before December 25, 1082, he was removed from the office of heir- apparent and the prince Mallikārūna, the eldest son of Vikrama by the crowned queen, was appointed as *yuvarāja*.[95] Naturally enough, this degradation and the consequent humiliation would have goaded Jayasiṁha to rebel against his brother. The vapid homilies of Bilhaṇa merely bring into high relief the earlier life of Vikrama when he rebelled and dethroned his elder brother Someśvara II. Although both Vikrama and Jayasiṁha tread the same path Vikrama had but little justification and Jayasiṁha had sufficient cause—, the former is exalted and the latter is condemned. The advocacy of Bilhaṇa here stoops to unprincipled disputation. He had, indeed an unfortunate concept of his duty as a court-poet to justify all acts of his patron, so that "the unsullied fame of his patron may spring from his composition"—"*śuddhā kīrtir shurati bhavatāṁ nūna-metatrasādat.*"

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[86] *VDC*, IV, v. 105. [87] *VDC*, XIV-XV.

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[88] *BG*, I, II, 44 n.
[89] *EC*., vii, Sk. 136; SII, IX, I, 114; 115;
[90] *EC*., XI, Dg. 1; *VDC*, V, v. 1;
[91] *BK*, 237 of 1928-9; *BKI*, 143; *BK*. No. 128 of 1926-27.
[92] *EC*., VII, Sk, 297.
[93] *Ibid*, Sk, 107.
[94] *EC*., VII, Sk, 297.
[95] *BKI*., *Intr*., and No. 127.; *EI*, XXVIII, 33.

The Attainment of **Chakravartin** *Status*

After Bāṇa, the concept of a *Chakravartin* becomes the central theme of the mid-land school of historiography, from which gradually arose two literary motifs—first, the winning of the hand of a princess, destined to be the consort of an imperial suzerain, and second, the union of the king with the Goddess of Royal Fortune Lakshmī. The idea of a *chakravartin*, which first occurs in the Brāhmaṇa literature[96] and later becomes the recurrent theme in the *Purāṇas*, epics and classical literature, was intricately woven into the politico-religious texture of the mediaeval life. According to the *Purāṇas*, *chakravartins* are born in each age as partial manifestations of Lord Vishṇu. They are characterized by four of the six divine powers of Vishṇu—the *strength*, *dharma*, *happiness* and *wealth*, by virtue of which, they succeed better than even the sages in establishing social order and bringing about happiness in society.[97] In the early mediaeval age, Jain scholars, court poets and court annalists further popularized the idea of *chakravartin*. In their *charitas* and *Purāṇas*, dealing with sixty-three excellent men (*śalākā-purusha*), Jain writers gave detailed accounts of the lives of several legendary, semi-legendary and historical suzerains.[98] Some of them even wove into their accounts the romantic episodes of these kings in the land of the Vidyādharas.

In literature and inscriptions, the abstract idea of the Royal Glory of the *chakravartins*, the partial incarnations of Vishṇu, is represented as the Goddess of Royal Fortune Lakshmī. When the rise in royal status is obtained through the defeat of a rival, the victorious king is represented as the Mandara mountain to seize forcibly the Lakshmī of the defeated king from the ocean of the hostile forces. Sometimes the motif is further elaborated, and the marriage ceremony of Lakshmī as a *punarbhū* (woman marrying a second time) with the victorious king is described. Thus, the

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[96] *Sāmavidhāna-Brāhmaṇa*, III, 5, 2.
[97] *Vāyu Purāṇa*, XLVII, 72-76.
[98] For a critical summary see *Winternitz*, *HIL*, II, 497 ff.

Radhanpur Copper Plate states that the Rāshṭrakūṭa king had captured by force the Royal Fortune of the Chālukyas like the Mandara mountain which drew forth Lakshmī from the ocean.[99] Vīsaladeva Vāghela is represented in a record as Lord Vīshṇu, who obtained the Lakshmī of the Karṇāṭas.[100] The Pratihāra king Bhoja is described as having married to the Royal Fortune of the Pālas, in accordance with the sacred injunctions enshrined in scriptures.[101]

The general form of the motif, however, is 'the selection of the king by the Goddess of Royal Fortune in a *svayaṁvara*'. The Junagadh inscription of Skandagupta records that after discarding other royal rivals, Lakshmī had selected him as her consort.[102] The same sentiment is expressed by Bāṇa, who mentions that of her own accord, Lakshmī stayed with the king Tārāpīḍa, despising the happiness of her home in the breast of Nārāyaṇa.[103] Rājaśekhara uses the motif in his description of the Pratihāra king Mahīpāla "who was the lover of Lakshmī selected in a *Svayaṁvara*".[104] "The *Rājyaśrī* came of her own accord and loved the Silāhāra king."[105] "Sindhurāja was chosen (*vṛita*) by Lakshmī herself (*svayaṁ*) in the battlefield."[106] In a cognate motif, the royal glory is represented as a beautiful princess, sometimes described as belonging to the Vidyādhara lineage, whose love the king wins after surmounting countless hazards. Within the coordinates of these two motifs, the theme of the midland school of history generally meanders.

In his earlier work *Karṇasundarī*, Bilhaṇa adopts the second motif, and describes the marriage of the Chaulukya king Karṇa with a Vidyādhara princess. Explaining the significance of the motif he says, "Karṇa, the full moon for the ocean of the Chaulukyas, attains the status of an emperor, by marrying the beautiful daughter of a Vidyādhara."[107] In the *Vikramāṅkadeva-charita*, however, he fuses both the motifs and describes the selection of his hero Vikramāditya VI in a *svayaṁvara* by the Vidyādhara princess Chandralekha, who, in this work, symbolizes the Goddess of Royal Fortune. Concluding his description of the *svayaṁvara* ceremony, Bilhaṇa says, "Vikrama, the lord of Kuntala, shone with added effulgence, as if the Royal Fortune of all other kings (*nikhila-nṛipati-Lakshmyā*) was transmitted to him through his union with the the Vidyādhara princess."[108]

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[99] *EI*, VI, 243 verse 3; for a similar idea, see *Raghuvaṁśa* III, 56.

[100] *IA*, VI, 210; or without any reference to the Mandara mountain as in *VDC*, I, 115.

[101] *EI*, XVIII, 109, verse 18. [102] *CII*, III, p. 59, line 5.

[103] *Kadambarī*, *pūrvabhāga*, Poona 1951, p. 54.

[104] *Bālabharata*, prologue. [105] *IA*, IX, 34.

[106] *Navasāhasāṅkacharita*, I, 59.

In his graphic but conventional account of the *svayaṁvara* of Chandralekhā, Bilhaṇa who "traversed the path leading to the Muse of Kālidāsa",[109] tried to emulate the latter. According to Bilhaṇa, immediately after his accession to the Chālukyan throne, Vikrama learnt about the ceremony of Chandralekhā, the Vidyādhara princess of Karahāṭa. The princess was a rare beauty, and Vikrama fell in love with her. The Chālukyan spy brought the news that Chandralekhā bore deep love towards him and that the Vidyādhara king would have gladly offered the hand of his daughter to Vikrama but for the fear of the refusal by the latter. He had, however, organized the *svayaṁvara* by the command of Śiva, who appeared before him in a dream. The king Vikrama thereupon proceeded to the capital of Karahāṭa on fleet horses. The princess was brought by a matron before the kings of Ayodhyā, Chedi, Kānyakubja, the region watered by the Chambala, Kālañjara, Gwalior, Mālava, the Gurjjara country, the Pāṇḍyas and the Cholas, all of whom she rejected. Eventually she came before Vikrama and placed the nuptial wreath round his neck. The choice was applauded by the matron and the damsels of the city. The rival kings wanted to obstruct the ceremony of marriage but were frightened away by the might of Vikrama.[110]

The princess Chandralekhā figures in severl Chālukya inscriptions as the favourite queen (*piriy-arasi*) of Vikrama and the

[107] *Karṇasundarī*, Ed. by Durgaprasad and K. P. Pareb, Bombay, 1932, I, 13, pp. 3-4.

[108] IX, 151. [109] *Karṇasundarī*, epilogue, p. 56.

[110] *VDC*, *Sarga* IX.

mother of Jayakarṇa, Someśvara III and Tailapa III.[111] The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* recounts among many follies of the Kashmirian king Harsha, his ill-conceived plan of attacking the Chālukyan territory to possess the beautiful Chandralekhā, with whom he fell in love through seeing her portrait.[112] Thus, the marriage of the Vidyādhara princess of Karahāṭa with Vikramāditya is undoubtedly a historical fact. But the *svayaṁvara* ceremony, as described by Bilhaṇa, does not seem to be historical. The queen Chandralekhā had at least three sons–Jayakarṇa, Someśvara III and Tailapa III.[113] Her second son, Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Someśvaradeva was ruling Banavāsī 12,000 in 1089,[114] and still earlier in 1083 he was a governor of Kisukad 70, Bāgādage 70 and Narayaṅgala 12.[115] Since he was younger than his co-uterine brother Jayakarṇa, the marriage of Vikrama with Chandralekhā must have taken place much carlier than 1076, when Vikrama was anointed as a king, and probably earlier than 1068, when Someśvara II ascended the throne.

The Vidyādhara king is to be identified with the Śilāhāra king of the Karahāṭaka branch, ruling over the districts of Kolhapur, Miraj and Karhad. Mārasiṁha[116] was probably, and Gaṇḍarāditya[117] was definitely a feudatory chief of the Chālukyas. The mighty kings of far off Kālañjara, Kānyakubja, Chedi, Pāṇḍya and Chola regions would hardly have come to a *svayaṁvara* at the invitation of a feudatory chieftain of so humble a status. Thus, in order to indicate the paramount position which his hero attained later in life, Bilhaṇa seems to have exalted an ordinary marriage of the Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Vikrama with the daughter of a feudatory chieftain to their union in a grand ceremony of *svayaṁvara*.

This concept of a *chakravartin*, a magnet ever pulling at the minds of the contemporary historians, gradually became a political feature of the mediaeval formalism, mechanically splashed in historical works. Court annalists recounted the military achievements of their kings, after the conventional *digvijayas* of ancient *chakravartins*. Thus, the Rāshtrakūṭa chronicler describes Kṛishṇa III as a mighty king ruling over the *chakravarti-kshetra*–the territory bounded by the Himālayas in the north, the Arabian sea in the west, the Ceylon in the south, and the Bay of Bengal in the east.[118] The elephantry of Pāla kings is described as having roamed in the distant parts of the country from the Himālayas to the Malaya mountains (Travancore hills), and from the Marwar region to the extreme eastern states. Such conventional exploits are attributed to Vigrahapāla II, Rājyapāla II and Mahīpāla.[119] In the same vein, the Kalachuri chronicler describes the conquests of Yuvarājadeva II.[120] The court poets of this age also advanced such fantastic claims on behalf of their royal patrons. Rājaśekhara praises Yuvarājadeva II as a *chakravartin* ruler of the Kalachuri family, having suzerainty over vast dominions from the source of the Gangā in the north to the Tāmbraparṇi in the south and from the lord of the Narmadā (i. e. the Arabian sea) to the north of the Milky ocean (?).[121] Historical narratives,[122] epics[123] and prose romances[124] are full of such extravagant accounts of royal conquests.

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[111] *Carn. Deśa Ins.* Vol. I, pp. 415, 422; *EHD*, p. 369; *EI*, XXVIII, p. 32 and fn. 4 and 6.

[112] VI, 179.

[113] *EI*, XXVI, p. 32 and fn. 6.

[114] BK, 66 of 1934-35, *AR., SIE*, 1934-35, p. 153.

[115] BK, 2 of 1927-28, *AR., SIE*, 1927-28, p. 20.

[116] *IA*, V, 321.

[117] G. H. Khare, *Sources of Mediaeval History of the Deccan*, Vol. I, p. 37 ff.

It is, therefore, small wonder that Bilhaṇa also describes the *digvijaya* of Vikrama in a conventional manner. As it is prescribed in *dharmaśastras*, and described in prose-romances, immediately after resuming the duties of a *de facto* heir-apparent, Vikrama started on a *digvijaya*. Accompanied by elephantry, when he, the Rāma of the Chālukya family, reached the shores of the (western) ocean, the latter betrayed signs of fear. Elephants of his army destroyed the sandal-wood trees of the Malaya mountain. The Chola ruler, who was driven away from his territory, could only sustain his life by drinking water from sylvan fountains. Vikrama set the Paramāra ruler firmly on the Mālava throne when the latter came before him as a suppliant. The *siddha* damsels in the Eastern mountains sang the songs of his glorious triumph over the Gauḍas, and of the forcible extirpation of the Kāmarūpa ruler by him. When sacked by him, Kāñchī lost all its splendour. The sage Agastya left the shores of the ocean when its water was mixed with the blood of the Kerala king. Afraid of Vikrama, the ruler of Ceylon took shelter in the hermitage of Agastya. Kāñchī was again assailed, and the Chola ruler defeated. The kings of Veṅgi and Chakrakūṭa suffered the same fate.[125]

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[118] *EI*, IV, pp. 284-285.

[119] *Ibid*, XXIX, 7: for other similar accounts of Pāla *digvijayas*, see D. C. Sircar, Digvijaya of King Chandra of the Mehrauli Pillar Inscription, *JRASBL*, V, 407, ff.

[120] *CII*, IV, p. 218, verse 27; [121] *Viddhaśālabhañjikā*, IV, verse 29.

[122] *HC*, p. 263. [123] *Raghuvaṁśa*, canto 4, *Śisupālavadha* II, 5

[124] *Yaśastilakachampu*, Kāvyamāla series, N. S. P., Bombay 1916, p. 221.

The conquest of Gauḍa and Kāmarūpa, easternmost kingdoms of the country, and Ceylon, the southernmost boundary of the *Chakravarti-kshetra*, are mentioned probably to lend the complexion of a conventional *digvijaya* to the usual warfare of Vikrama. But within this traditional framework, Bilhaṇa seems to have portrayed actual history. Several Chālukya and Chola records describe the fights of the Chālukya Vikrama, the governor of Gaṅgavāḍi, with the Cholas between 1050 and 1060.[126] The Karuvur inscription of Vīrarājendra, the Chola king, refers to a war with the Chālukyas in 1063. A year later, Vikkalana is described as fighting with the Cholas at Kūḍala Saṅgamaṁ.[127] There is sufficient evidence also for the important role he played in establishing the Paramāra ruler Jayasiṁha firmly on the throne, after routing the allied forces of the Chedis and Chālukyas.[128] The *Kaliṅgattuparani* makes it probable that on the eve of his father's death in 1088, Vikrama was waging war against Chakrakūṭa and Veṅgi rulers.[129]

Thus, in order to lend his hero the halo of a traditional *chakravartin*, Bilhaṇa had recourse to the conventional devices of *digvijaya* and *svayaṁvara*. Nevertheless, within this artificial framework, he portrayed actual history. Leaving for a while the literary elements and poetic embellishments, we find that motivated by a nostalgic tendency towards the past, these mediaeval historians tried to understand the contemporary history with the help of ancient forms and ideas. Here, in their attempts to study the present in the light of the past, they offer a striking contrast to those modern historians who tend to study the past with direct and perpetual reference to the present.

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[125] Canto, IV.

[126] N. K. Sastri, *Cholas*, pp. 273-276; *SII*, V, 465, 647. G. Yazdani, *Early History of Deccan*, I, pp. 333-345.

[127] *SII*, III, p. 37. [128] D. C. Ganguly, *History of Paramāra Dynasty*, 123 f.

[129] *Early History of Deccan*, I, pp. 344-345.

Conclusion

Following the latter day tradition of *itihāsa*, Bilhaṇa wove the facts of history into an intelligible fabric on a traditional pattern. This naturally involved an over-simplification of facts and an over-dramatization of historical story. Further, his purpose in composing the chronicle was "to furnish a drink of immortality to his patron's body of fame" which would otherwise have perished "with the sound of the drum which proclaims the hour of the man's departure".[130] Adopting this attitude, he did not merely chronicle facts, but, having visualized the course of history from his own angle, he pronounced his verdict in favour of his patron. Secondly, theocentric view of life, inculcated by the *āgamas* in the Early Mediaeval Age, had thrown the whole course of human history out of historical focus. The *Vedas* and the *āgamas* were the two main fountain-springs of brahmanical thought. Throughout the ancient period, these two streams ran parallel, influencing each other. Centuries before Bilhaṇa came on the stage, the āgamic sects, with their emphasis on devotion to God, had pushed the Vedic tradition, centred round human actions done in accordance with the injunctions of the Vedas, into a subsidiary position. The transcendental world-view and the theory of the grace of God[131] had reorientated the earlier tradition of *itihāsa* by modifying its fundamental concepts. The child of his age, Bilhaṇa shows all these āgamic tendencies. "The consequence of this is" to quote a statement of Collingwood about European historiography, "that when mediaeval historiography is looked at from the point of view of a merely scholarly historian, the kind of historian who cares for nothing except accuracy in facts, it seems not only unsatisfactory but deliberately and repulsively wrong-headed; and the nineteenth century historians, who did in general take a merely scholarly view of the nature of history, regarded it with extreme lack of sympathy".[132] This, of course, strikingly applies *verbatim* to the *Vikramāṅkadeva-charita.* But Collingwood further adds, "Nowadays, when we are less obsessed by the demand for critical accuracy and more interested in interpreting facts, we can look at it with a more friendiy eye."[133] This is true indeed in the case of the modern historians of the mediaeval Europe. But unfortunately, Bilhaṇa still stands as an outcaste on the fringe of habitation, craving for the permission of merely scholarly historians to join the company of historical writers. With their ideas of rationalism and historical criticism, the latter, however, regard him as an absolute alien and stubbornly refuse to have any dealings with him,[134] who had his queer ideas of the divine interventions in the course of human history. But to neglect him simply because his ideas are very different from those of modern historians, is to regard the modern age as absolute, with reference to which other ages are to be understood. This palpably unhistorical attitude can be changed, and the true significance of Bilhaṇa's work can be grasped only when 'a more friendly eye' cares to look at him.

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[130] *VDC.* XVIII, 106. [131] *Infra* pp. 162-165.

However, we do not propose that the *Vikramāṅkadeva-charita* be considered a historical treatise in the modern sense of the term, or that it is permissible for a modern historian to commit the mistakes which vitiate the historical works of the mediaeval times. But we certainly take the liberty of suggesting that if we do not want to reduce the mediaeval history into a mere chronicle of events, a rope of sand instead of a historical wreath with the events strung on the thread of ideas, we shall have to study the events and facts in the context of the cultural complex of the mediaeval historians, and to understand sympathetically their ideas, however antiquated they may be.

Thus, with the help of inscriptions, we can check the way in which Bilhaṇa distorted historical facts. This distortion, however, is as much historical as the facts themselves. Through distortion we perceive the drama of a clash of ideas, the tricks of side-stepping which the historian employed to gain his end, the plea of the defence counsel. The *Vikramāṅkadeva-charita* should neither be studied as an authentic source of historical facts, nor be rejected as a poetic fabrication. It is to be taken as a statement of the accused who advances what is known in Hindu jurisprudence as a special plea (*pratyavaskanda*,)[135] or in modern terminology, a bonafide claim of right made in good faith. Evidently here, the essence of the work lies in its emphasis on contexts, motives and interpretations.

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[132] R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, Oxford, 1961, p. 56.

[133] *Ibid*, p. 56.

[134] For example the statement of Prof. K. Nilakanta Sastri, "The principle abopted in this work is not to accept as history any statement of Bilhaṇa which is not clearly corroborated by other evidence" *EHD*. I, 345 n.

Further, there is an unusual similarity between the present epic and the *Harshacharita*. Bāṇa symbolically represented Harsha as a *chakravartin* through his meeting with Rājya-śrī—his sister and alternatively the Goddess of Royal Fortune—and through the receiving of "a jewelled necklace (*ratnāvalī*) as a present from the Buddhist monk Divākaramitra. The symbolism was partly based on the meaning of the word Rājyaśrī, and partly on the story of Ratnāvalī in the play of that name. Bilhaṇa employs the same motif-and describes the marriage of Vikrama with the Vidyādhara princess. Besides the general outline, the details and the plea justifying the actions of the royal patron are also similar. As there is sufficient epigraphical data for checking the account of Bilhaṇa, a critically comparative study of the two works may furnish clues for weeding the fictitious and conventional elements out of the *Harshacharita* and reconstructing the life of Harsha, for which there is little reliable information.

There is one more important feature of these mediaeval works on which we would like to touch before we leave Bilhaṇa. These works show a very strong tendency of nostalgia towards past, expressed in the anachronistic representation of contemporary kings in the role of the heroes of the bygone ages. Satyāśraya Chālukya is portrayed as Bhīma the Pāṇḍava, Someśwara I, Vikramāditya VI, Siddhraja Chalukya,[136] Prithvīrāja III and others as Rāma the Aikshvāku, Kadambavāsa as Hanumān, and Bhuvanaikamalla as Garuḍa.[137] The same process in seen when the mediaeval kings are decked out with all the glories of ancient *chakravartins*, by making them perform extensive *digvijayas*, and win their brides in *svayaṁvara*, or when the mediaeval dynasties such as the Chāhamānas and the Chālukyas are given the pedigree of solar kshatriyas, supposed to have flourished in hoary antiquity. Pre-occupied with our concepts, we may tend to observe that the self-understanding of the mediaeval culture was predominantly mythological and that these writers indulged in simple myth-making. A deeper analysis, however, may reveal the mediaeval trend of rationalization[138] operating within the framework of an ideal system, enshrined in scriptures. It is not mere myth-making but the conditioning of the present by the ancient norms and ideas, the interpretation of the present in the light of the past. This pseudoscopic vision, in which the past, with reference to which the present is seen, looms large, characterizes all the mediaeval writers of the Mid-land school of history. It offers a striking contrast to some of the modern historians of ancient India, who project the present on to the past[139] not only by seeking modern concepts in ancient times, nor even only by finding the institutions of recent growth in olden times, but also by organizing *ex cathedra* the past history from the view-point of the present, and applying modern values in their judgments on ancient people.

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[135] Where the defendant, accepting as correct the matters or facts set out by the plaintiff, raises a plea to justify the action of the accused. See P. V. Kane, *History of Dharma Sāstra*, III, 301.

[136] *Supra*, p. 97 n.

[137] *Infra* pp. 223-233. [138] *Infra* pp. 250-254; 283 ff.

[139] Modern Historians of Ancient India, *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, pp. 288-290; Modern Muslim Historical Writing on Mediaeval Muslim India, *Ibid*, p. 307.

CHAPTER IV

THE VIKRĀMĀṄKĀBHYUDAYA OF SOMEŚVARA III, BHŪLOKAMALLA

THE ONLY historian of royal blood in ancient India was Someśvaradeva III, Bhūlokamalla, the Chālukya king of Kalyāṇī, and the son and successor of Vikramāditya VI, known in history as a mighty warrior but in tradition as a great patron of poets and scholars, such as Bilhaṇa and Vijñāneśvara. Someśvara III is known to fame as an author of the *Mānasollāsa*,[1] an encyclopaedic work on royal duties and pleasures, completed on Friday, the 22nd March 1129.[2] But he had also written a biography of his father, entitled the *Vikramāṅkābhyudaya*, an incomplete manuscript of which, though discovered at Pattan before 1925,[3] has not yet attracted the attention of historians. Our study of the text is based on a photostat copy of this unique manuscript.[4]

The incomplete manuscript contains only three chapters. The colophons at the end of the first two, describe the work as a *mahākāvya* or an epic. But since, with the exception of a few verses sprinkled in each of the chapters, it is composed mainly in prose on the life-story of a historical personage, it may well be described as an *ākhyāyikā* or historical prose-narrative. The conclusion is further reinforced by the fact that in treatment and development of the plot, and style and diction, it emulates the famous *ākhyāyikā* of Bāṇa. However, during this period, the distinction between *mahākāvya*, *ākhyāyikā* and *kathā* was almost obliterated in Saṁskrit probably because of the influence of the literary conventions of the Prākṛit and Apabhraṁśa writings.[5]

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[1] *Mānasollāsa*, Ed. by Gajanan K. Shrigondekar, M. A., G. O. S. Baroda, 1925, 1939.

[2] This is known from the verses 61–64 of the second chapter (p. 34). But see *contra* the view of the editor that the work was composed in 1131. This is however wrong. The *saumya saṁvatsara* in the southern cycle of the Jovian year started in 1129. Further, the work was completed on the first day of the month of *chaitra* which was Friday. It was in 1129 that the first day of *chaitra* was Friday. In 1131 it was Monday. See Svami Kannu Pillai, *Indian Ephimeries*, III, p. 260.

[3] First mentioned by Shrigendekar in 1925 (*Mānasollāsa*, Vol. I, Introduction, p. III). M.L. Nagar, *Vikramankadeva-charita*, Vārāṇasī, 1943, Introduction, p. 40; L. B. Gandhi and C. P. Dalal, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Jain Bhandars at Pattan*, 1937, Baroda, G. O. S. pp. 80–81. The description of the manuscript as given in this catalogue is however incorrect.

[4] We are thankful to Shri Muni Punya Vijayaji, Jaina Upāśnaya, Luṇsavada, and Pt. Dalasukhabhai Malavaniya, Director, Bhāratīya Saṁskṛiti Vidyābhavana, Ahmedabad for making a photostat copy of the manuscript available to us. The ms. which is in a fairly good condition, contains 80 leaves written on both sides.

The first chapter, which opens with benedictory verses, gives a graphic description of the geography and the people of Karṇāṭaka. The second dwells at length over the splendour of Kalyāṇa, the capital of Kuntala, founded by Someśvara I Āhavamalla. The last and the biggest is devoted to the history of the Chālukya house from the beginning to the anointment of Vikramāditya VI as an heir-apparent and his expedition for world-wide conquest. It opens with a genealogical account of the Chālukyas.

After the famous kshatriya monarchs from Pūruravas to Kshemaka, sixty-one princes of the solar dynasty ruled over Ayodhyā, followed by Satyāśraya, also known as Vishṇuvardhana, whose name was borne by his descendants as a dynastic appelation. He had the insignia of conch, discuss and primeval boar. His two banners of white and black colours, represented respectively the white and black waters of the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā. The crest of the peacock-tail adorned his royal umbrella and fly-whisk. Since he obtained blessings from various gods at the Chālukya mountain, he was also known as Chālukya.

The genealogy then runs further listing the names of the Chālukyan kings of Vātāpi down to Kīrthivarmman II, whose uncle Bhīmaparākrama initiated the line of the later Chālukyas, in which Vikramāditya IV flourished. He was married to the princess Bonthā of the Chedi family, ruling over the Pāriyātra. During his reign-period, the gods in the heaven assembled, and with Śiva as their leader approached the Lord Vishṇu reclining on his serpent couch, and informed him of the atrocities perpetrated on the earth, by demons who assumed human form. After a moment's reflection, Yogeśvara-Vishṇu announced that he was well aware of the Rāshṭrakūṭa demons who on the earth were obstructing religious performances, and that to annihilate the vicious though valiant *rākshasas*, he would soon incarnate himself as the son of Vikramāditya IV through the Chedi princess Bonthā-devī. Meanwhile, in a dream Vikramāditya IV saw Lord Vishṇu sitting on his lap, and was delighted at the prospect of having the Lord as his son. Bearing the divine marks of conch, discus and lotus on his hands and feet, Tailapa II was born to the Chedi princess in due course of time. He exterminated the line of the wicked Rāshṭrakūṭas and retrieved the fallen fortunes of the Chālukya family. Later on, Someśvara I Āhavamalla ascended the throne. He made the sinful lord of Kāñchī bathe in the waters of his sword. But in spite of the martial glory and royal splendour, Someśvara was tormented by his desire of having a worthy son and successor. Once in a dream he saw his ancestors, clad in the charming dresses and adorned with jewelled ornaments, requesting him to pay off the debts that he owed to them by having a son. The king thereupon worshipped Śiva with all the pomp and splendour. Once at the close of night, Śiva appeared in the form of an ascetic and told him that as a result of his devotions he would have a son. Śiva, however, added a dismal note by saying that since at the time of the worship, the mind of the king harboured those propensities which are the characteristics of the *rajas*, the son thus born to him would have the elements of *rajas* and *tamas* pre-eminent in his personality. Dismayed at the prospect of having an evil-minded son. the king proceeded to the religious site of Śrī-śaila, where freed from all the wicked and mundane thoughts, he worshipped the god Mallikārjuna. When the king thus passed there quite a few days in deep devotions, one morning he heard a divine voice which sunddenly stopped after intimating that Lord Vishṇu would be born to him as his son. The greedy king, however, lingered on for some time with the hope of having one more son. Then, in response to his desire, he again heard the voice of some invisible god who told him thus: "When churned excessively, even the pure and serene Ocean of

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[5] Svayambhu describes his epic *Paumachariya* as *Rāma-kahā* (*Paumachariya*, I, 2). The title of Dhanapāla's epic is *Bhavisayatta-kahā*. The *Jasahara-chariu* (I, 1) and the *Paumasiri chariu* (I, 1) call themselves *dhamma-kahā*.

Milk produced poison. No wonder then, that the benevolent grace of God, when goaded by your insatiable desire, further grants you a son full of wicked proclivities."

After some time, the queen Bāchalā bore the first son. During pregnancy, she exhibited a cruel and wicked turn of mind. She punished her friends for no fault of theirs. She preferred to stay in the dark and dingy underground chambers. She cut the trees of her pleasure-garden which she had herself reared. She fed the crows and neglected the parrots, swans and pigeons. She took a morbid interest in cocks and boars being trampled under the feet of the rutting elephants. Realizing that the evil disposition of the pregnant queen presaged the birth of a vicious child, the king became despondent. In an inauspicious moment, when not a single planet was in ascendance, the queen gave birth to her first child. The king as a matter of duty arranged to perform the rituals, attendant on the birth of a child, and gave him a meaningless name Soim. As was expected, the child from his boyhood, demonstrated his evil nature through cruel and mean actions. The king could take solace only from the hope of having a second son. After some time, in an auspicious moment the queen again came in the family way. The queen at this time had virtuous, benevolent and valorous cravings. Discarding all the robes kept in the royal store, she draped herself in yellow garments, adorned her head with the golden tiara, expressed her interest in arms and missiles, requested her husband to proceed on conquest, and took delight in elephant-fights in the royal arena. Eventually, as Rāma was born to Kauśalyā, a son was born to her in the morning of the bright fortnight, during an auspicious asterism when all the planets were in ascendance. The birth was celebrated with all the royal pomp and show. Astrologers predicted that the new-born son would be a ruler of the whole earth, and that he would excel Sagara, Nala, Nahusha, Ambarīsha, Māndhātā and Rāmachandra. As the child was an incarnation of Trivikrama-Vishṇu, he was named as Vikramāditya. All the domestic rituals were duly performed. In the eleventh year, Rudra Miśra, the royal chaplain, performed the *upanayana* ceremony of the child and on the fourth day of the ceremony, when *samāvartana* was over, the boy was handed over to teachers for training in various branches of learning. After his education was completed, the ceremony of binding the dagger at his belt (*kshurikā-bandha*) was performed. In the sixteenth year, the prince was anointed as heir-apparent. The king then ordered the astrologers to fix an auspicious moment for his favourite prince to start on a world-conquering expedition, and commanded his prime minister to remove all inauspicious things and persons from the route of the prince's march. The astrologers eventually decided upon the Vijayādaśamī, the tenth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Āśvina, about an hour before sunrise when Jupiter was in Leo, the Sun in Virgo (in the second house), Saturn and Mars in Capricorn (in the sixth house), Mercury and Venus in favourable dispositions and the Moon in Aquarius (in the seventh house) as the right moment for the start of *digvijaya*. The king directed his commander-in-chief to wait in readiness for the march with his army of elephants, horses, chariots, foot-soldiers, and hereditary-, mercenery-, guild-, forest-, and allied forces. Princes, *mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras*, *sāmantās* and others were likewise instructed to await the hour of the march. The Brāhmaṇas and the ladies on that day . . . .

Here the manuscript abruptly stops, leaving the last sentence unfinished.

Save the *Harshacharita* of Bāṇa, this *Vikramāṅkābhyudaya* is the only historical prose-narrative of ancient India available to us, and hence its discovery is of more than usual interest to the study of the historical literary writings inasmuch as by comparison with the earlier *ākhyāyikā*, it affords an opportunity of discovering patterns, motifs and devices–the way through which the objective facts of history are moulded into a literary story. In the case of the *Vikramāṅkābhyudaya*, there is an additional advantage as the authentic information on the life of Vikramāditya VI, the hero of the prose-narrative, is available from inscriptions containing much historical detail, which in the case of the few inscriptions which mention Harsha, celebrated in the *Harshacharita*, is sadly lacking. Thus, the historicity of two devices, which Bhūlokamalla employs to bring into high relief the divine character of hero as contrasted with the almost diabolical nature of his rivals-Someśvara II and Jayasiṁha, can be investigated and checked by means of inscrip-tions, and thus the purpose and significance of these devices can well be studied.

According to Bhūlokamalla, as a result of his penance and devotions, Someśvara I Āhavamalla obtained three sons from Śiva. The eldest was an outcome of the *rajas* element, which had manifested itself as arrogance in Someśvara at the time of his devotions. As once the deadly and black poison had emerged from the shining, white and invigorating Ocean of Milk, so the wicked Jaiyasiṁha came out of the benevolent grace of God, when goaded ever and anon by the king's insatiable desire, a component element of *tamtas*. Consequently, Jayasiṁha partook of the evil nature of *tamtas*. High above and quite apart from these two was the personality of Vikramāditya VI. At the request of Śiva, the Lord Vishṇu had incarnated himself as Vikramāditya.

We have already investigated the story of the king's devotions and the consequent birth of sons to him, and found that it cannot stand the test of a historical scrutiny.[6] This theme of a king's doiag penance in order to obtain a son was quite common in the literary works of the mediaeval period, and is generally introduced to indicate the hero's future greatness—and the pre-ordination of his enthronement.[7] But, unlike Bhūlokamalla, other writers did not utilize it to depict the rivals in evil colours. Thus Bāṇa does not indicate any basic meanness grounded in the nature of Rājya, consequent upon any divine decree. Likewise Bilhaṇa simply states that Someśvara II and Jayasiṁha were born to Someśvara I Āhavamalla in accordance with the deserts of his deeds, whereas the lord Śiva was pleased to grant the boon that a pious son, Vikramāditya would be born to him. Bhūlokamalla, however, not only invests his hero with divinity but also attributes the demoniac nature of his hero's rivals to providential decree. The wickedness of Someśvara II is further emphasized by the cruel and mean cravings of the queen at the time of the first pregnancy, and his wicked and ignoble activities during his boyhood.

Even more significant is the omission, and sometimes the purposeful distortion, of certain facts relevant to the history of Someśvara II. Thus, Bhūlokamallr gives an explanation, however unconvincing, for the fact that the birth of Someśvara was not duly celebrated, although hilarious and maddening festivities marked the birth of his junior, co-uterine brother Vikramāditya VI. One may

[6] *Supra*, pp. 105-106. [7] *Supra*, pp. 106ff.

even prevail upon oneself to accept the reason advanced for the neglect in the upbringing of the wicked Soim to whom no meaningful name could be given. But Bhūlokamalla outsteps all bounds, when he omits to mention the fact that Someśvara II was anointed to heir-apparency. On the other hand, he makes a claim, which neither inscriptions nor even the panegyric account of Bilhaṇa bear out, that Vikramāditya VI was invested with heir-apparency in his sixteenth year. Although the later part of the story is lost to us, the trend of the narrative, neglecting the life and rôle of Someśvara II, strongly suggests that the complete text omitted to mention his reign, as it fails to mention his heir-apparency. It is however strange that the inscriptions of the period of the royal author, Bhūlokamalla, make a clear mention of Someśvara II as a ruler. This queer feature is observed in the *Harshacharita* also. Bāṇa telescoped the events by skipping over several uncomfortable facts, including the accession of Rājya to the throne of Sthāṇvīśvara, although royal epigraphs of the times of Bāṇa represent Rājya as the royal predecessor of Harsha.[8]

The explanation of this strange feature is to be found in the nature of the historical prose-narratives and in the form of the popular entertainment known as the *pāthakaṁ* or recitation, through which these prose-narratives reached the people at large.

We have seen above that the *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition was transmitted through recitation accompanied by music and mime, and that a form of *itihāsa*, namely the *ākhyāyikā* or illustration (*arthavāda*) of religious precepts (*vidhi*) gradually assumed a literary garb and, through *nāṭakākhyāyikā*, developed into historical prose narratives, the earliest example of which is the *Harshacharita*.[9] It has also been pointed out that the historical prose-narrative is an attempt to engraft contemporary royal history upon the popular ancient *itihāsa* tradition. The contemporaneity of events appealed to the general people and the ancient *itihāsa*-tradition carried the religious sanction with it. Justifying the composition of the *Prabandha-chintāmaṇi*, Merutunga, who flourished a little later than Bhūlokamalla, says "the ancient *kathās* and *Purāṇas* do not delight the heart of the learned so much as the episodes of persons nearer our times,"[10] and so he commends the narration of contemporary events to illustrate religious maxims. In course of religious discourses, these *prabandhas* were narrated at popular gatherings. The *Harshacharita* was narrated by Bāṇa in a circle of his kinsmen much as the *Vāyupurāṇa* was recited by Sudṛishṭi in the same group.[11] Bāṇa's work was composed as a new Bhārata story to be recited in general assemblies for their edification.[12] The recitation of the *Gauḍavaho*, an account of which is given in the text itself, resembles the *pāṭhakaṁs* prevalent in Kerala at present.[13] Unlike Icelandic sagas, these works were thus meant not for merely private readings, but for recitation in popular gatherings and, therefore, the ruling dynasties and their court-circles took special care to avoid all uncomfortable facts which might prejudice the subjects against them.

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[8] *Supra*, pp. 77, 92. [9] *Supra*, pp. 58, 63.

In the case of the *Vikramāṅkābhyudaya* there seems to be an additional reason for suppressing certain facts. The famous Vaishṇava philosopher Rāmānuja, regarded in the tradition as an incarnation of Śesha, who wielded considerable influence upon people, was persecuted by the Cholas.[14] He therefore took shelter in the Hoysāḷs territory and initiated Biṭṭi-deva, later known by the Vaishṇava name[15] Vishṇuvardhana, into his faith. The biographies of Rāmānuja, professedly belonging to contemporary times, mention an upheaval following the religious persecution which ultimately resulted into the extinction of the direct line of the Cholas.[16] As the popular rebellion and the consequent death of Adhirājendra, the last Chola ruler in the direct line of succession from Vijayālaya, are mentioned in the *Vikramāṅkadeva-charita*[17] and the *Kalingattuparani*,[18] some historians are inclined to identify

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[10] I, 6. [11] *HC.*, 132. [12] *Ibid*, 140.

[13] Bodhāyana, *Bhagavajyuktīyaṁ*, Trichur, 1925, p. XVII, Pāthakaṁ, *IHQ*, III, 659-662; Recitation, *The Cultural Heritage of India*, III, pp. 504ff; Vākpati, *Gauḍavaho*, verses 805-856.

[14] *The Cholas*, 295-296.

[15] Dr. Derret however (The *Hoysāḷas*, Oxford, 1957, p. 222) challenges the view that Biṭṭideva assumed Vaishṇava name after his conversion to Vaishṇavism by Rāmānuja.

[16] Govindāchāryasvāmin, *The Life of Rāmānuja*, Madras, 1906, p. 170ff; S.K. Aiyangar, *Ancient India*, pp. 150, 207; *The Cholas*, p. 300 fn. 43, and pp. 295-296.

[17] *VDC*, VI, 26.

the Chola persecutor with Adhirājendra, the ally and brother-in-law of Vikramāditya VI.

Further Vishṇuvardhana Hoysāḷa, the first decade of whose reign had been uneventful, embarked on an ambitious plan of the conquest of the neighbouring kingdoms immediately after his Vaishṇava initiation in 1116. In the year of his conversion, his general Gangarāja succeeded in capturing Talkad and a little later gave a knock-out blow to the Cholas.[19] Shortly afterwards, Vishṇuvardhana attacked the Paṇdyas of Noḷambavādi and stormed the fortress of Uchchaṅgi.[20] In 1117, he raided the Chālukyan territories.[21] In the fourth regnal year of Bhūlokamalla, he besieged Hangal and beheaded the Kademba ruler Taila II "a great favourite of his lord" Bhūlokamalla.[22] By 1136, he destroyed Mānasa root and branch, annexed Banavāsī 12,000, pursued Jayakeśi II of Goa, and gained possession of Palasige 12,000.[23] Next year he crossed the Tungabhadrā and laid siege to Hangal.[24] Thus, he successfully measured swords with the imperial powers of the Cholas and the Chālukyas.

Although such ceaseless jockeying for imperial position was the common note of medieval heroism, and love for military glory in itself constituted a sufficient motive for it, in view of the fact that, in the very first year of his Vaishṇava initiation,[25] he was described as the eleventh incarnation of Vishṇu and later on as the lord born to destroy *danujas* (demons),[26] the religious factor also seems to have played its rôle by adding a spur to the incessant warfares which marked his reign after 1116, as contrasted with the peaceful decade at its beginning.

The danger from Vishṇuvardhana was realized by Bhūlokamalla quite early in his reign. In its third year he set out on a *digvijaya*

[18] *The Cholas*, p. 296.
[19] Rice, *Mysore and Coorg*, p. 93 and n; *The Cholas*, II, p. 42.
[20] *EC*, VI, CM. 99, Rice, *op. cit*, p. 100.
[21] *Mysore Arch. Survey*, 1912, p. 40. See also *DKD*, 453, 497.
[22] *EC*, XII, Gb. 34. [23] *EC*, V, Belur 17; *ibid*, Bi, 93.
[24] *EC*, V, Bl, 202.
[25] *EC*, VI, Hn. 58; *EC*, V, I, Bl. 58.
[26] B. Srikanthaiya, The Hoysāḷa Empire, *QJMS*, VII, p. 304.

and pitched his camp at Hulliṇīyatīrtha on the Varadā,[27] probably with the intention of curbing the strong and aggressive Hoysāḷa feudatory.

It is not, therefore, impossible that the Chālukyan court as a counter-move represented Vikramāditya VI as an incarnation of Vishṇu, shorn of all human faults and frailties. The episode of Someśvara II, which adversely reflects upon the character of Vikramāditya VI, was thus judiciously avoided. Such omissions and distortions, which rarely occur in official records such as inscriptions and *rājāvalīs*, are frequently made in literary works under the pretext of poetic license. Thus, Harsha, the patron of Bāṇa, introduced substantial modifications in the story of Udayana as current in his age and ingeniously offered the *raison d'être* for it *Priyadarśikā* by introducing a scene in which the story of Vāsavadattā's love and marriage with Udayana, as adapted for the stage by Sāṅkṛityāyanī, an aged confidante of the queen, was enacted before Vāsavadattā herself. The immodest alterations raised the anger of the Vatsa queen and she intended to leave the theatre out of exasperation when the former informed her that a play-wright has poetic license to take liberties with a historical theme which, of necessity, should be modified for being moulded into a literary story.[28]

So in the *Vikramāṅkābhyudaya* the rule of Someśvara II was completely overlooked in order to build up the flawless divinity of Vikramāditya VI and thus the war against the Hoysāḷas was waged on 'the home front' by publishing propaganda in favour of the divine rule of the Chālukyas.

The Personality of Vikramāditya VI and Mediaeval Formalism.

The portrait of Vikrama is drawn in formal colours. The account of his early life—his birth at the time when all planets were in the ascendant, the prediction of astrologers that he would excel the great *Chakravartin* kings of ancient times such as Sagara, Nahasha,

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[27] *EC*, VII, Sk. 100; *EHD*, 370.

[28] *Priyadarśikā*, Ed. N. G. Surri, Poona, 1928, Act III. See D. C. Ganguly, *History of the Paramāra Dynasty*, p. 284, for the *Tilakamañjarī* of Dhanapāla.

Nala, Ambarīsha, Māndhātā and Rāmachandra, his striking precocity in learning and the greatness exhibited by him in his boyhood—, is almost an adaptation of Bāṇa's description of Harsha in his early days. After the ceremony of the *Kshurikā-bandha*, it is stated that Vikrama was anointed as heir-apparent and that preparations were made for his starting on *digvijaya* in the early hours of the *Vijayādasamī*, the tenth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Āśvina. The author has taken care to describe the dispositions of the planets in the zodiac at the time of the military expedition. Thus, Jupiter was in Leo, the Sun in Virgo (in the second house), Saturn and Mars in Capricorn (in the sixth house). Mercury and Venus in favourable dispositions—and the Moon in Aquarius (in the seventh house) at the time of the start.

Since Bilhaṇa explicitly states that Someśvara II and not Vikramāditya VI was anointed as heir-apparent, the entire story of the investiture of Vikrama is a later concoction. The story of his *digvijaya* is likewise unhistorical. The planetary conjunction at the time of *digvijaya* as mentioned by Bhūlokamalla never occurred in the life-time of Someśvara I. The nearest date in the century when the majority of planets occupied the stated dispositions in the zodiac was 19 September, 1078 A.D.,[29] more than seven years after the self-immolation of Someśvara I in the Tungabhadrā.

In fact, Bhūlokamalla has given us a formal picture of the ideal king of mediaeval Hindu polity rather than a real account of Vikrama's life. The author was himself a typical representative of the formal and orthodox king of mediaeval period. In spite of his mediocrity, he represented himself as a great king in the line of ancient *Chakravartis*. An inscription of his reign describes him thus: "To Permāḍideva, like the Sun from the Eastern mountain, bright with the effulgence of widespread glory, was born the king Soma. When he was born, forthwith affliction was born to the lines of hostile kings; great love for him was born throughout the Kuntala country; to the ever celebrated Bhāratī, a companion was born. What king could be compared to him? When he was yet a boy, he wanted the jewels in the crowns of hostile kings and the jewels on the temples of their elephants to bind on the string round his waist. As soon as he began to walk, the hostile kings began to walk away into forests."[29a] A carpet-knight as he was, he marched on the formal *digvijaya* in his third regnal year, the auspicious moment for the start of which was fixed by the astrologer Nannaya more than two years before, on the occasion of his accession to the Chālukyan throne. He set out and encamped "in peace and wisdom" at Hulliniya-tirtha, probably to encounter the feudatory Hoysāḷa chief Vishṇuvardhana. This was probably his only military venture and still, like his celebrated father, he conformed to the tradition of great kings, by founding an era which could not survive even him.

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[29] We are thankful to Padma-bhūṣhaṇa, Shri Sūrya Narayan Vyāsa the Astrologer Royal, for confirming the conclusion of my calculation.

In fact, this formal attitude towards life was the characteristic features of the court culture of the new warrior class of the Rajputs. As they were not directly related to the ancient aristocracies, out of their sense of inferiority, they tended to adopt, with zeal of new members of the privileged group, all the traditions of ancient orders of the Kshatriyas, in form but not in spirit.[30] Further the rise of the powerful merchant class concomitant with the new urban economy, made the ruling class all the more conscious of their powers and privileges, with the result that an emphasis was laid on the form and conventions of the court culture. The mediaeval formalism was projected by the erudite author, Bhūlokamalla, himself steeped in the conventions of the age, on to the life of Vikrama by the fictitious story of his *digvijaya*.

Transcendental World-view and Divinization of History

The early mediaeval period was an age of great disintegration and partial rebirth. *Chakravartin* kings passed away to give place to regional rulers. The *varṇāśrama* organization of yore disintegrated and remodelled itself in the narrow ramifications of regional castes and sub-castes. The Vedic tradition declined in force and influence. There was a slow yet sure decay of the traditional order which generated a sense of frustration in the higher strata of society. Smṛitīs, *Purāṇas*, *āgamas*, literature and inscriptions declared the present as the evil age "which was the ravisher of good behaviour... ; when kings adopted reprehensible courses of conduct", and when, in short, all kinds of wicked deeds were perpetrated.[31]

[29a] *EC*, VII, I, Sk. 100. [30] *Supra*, pp. 97-98.

The psychology of the times was therefore marked by unrelieved pessimism. The transitoriness of the world frequently recurs in inscriptions of this period. An epigraph, as early as 684 A.D., exhorts wise men to perform religious deeds because "life of mankind is as unstable as the drops of water on the blade of grass; this youth of men is as frivolous as the leaves of tremulous reeds, and prosperity is as transitory as the splendour of light in the rays of the autumnal moon."[32] It is customary in the copper plate inscriptions of several dynasties to emphasize the momentariness of the world.[33]

Besides this depiction of the transitoriness, unhappiness and wickedness of the world in high relief, very fascinating pictures of heavenly pleasures were drawn. Epigraphs generally dilate upon descriptions of heaven. "There are golden palaces to reside in; desires are satisfied by mere willing; celestial nymphs and *gandharvas* are ready to wait upon a religious person in heaven."[34] Thus to a man in general, this life was a dreary journey and unmixed happiness lay only beyond the vale of tears.

This other worldly tendency was further accentuated by the āgamic theory of the grace of God as opposed to the Mīmāṁsaka principle of the regular fruition of Karma. This naturally undermined the confidence of man in himself and his actions. He relied heavily on the blessings of God, who was the protector of the three worlds, king of the universe[35] and bestower of bliss. Worldly pelf, prosperity and kingdoms were surrendered unto Him. He was worshipped in truly royal fashion. In mythologies, He was conceived as the supreme king. The amorous dalliances of Vishṇu and Śiva were described in literature and inscriptions on the lines of the pleasure-sports of the kings.[36] Worldly kings, on the other hand, were conceived as divine. The apotheosis of kings—a feature of the Hindu polity which developed much earlier—, was in full vogue during this period. Gods were thus kingly, monarchs divine, and men tended to be otherworldly in their attitude.

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[31] D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, Vol. I, pp. 393 ff.

[32] Nagar Ins. of Guhila, *Bhārata-Kaumudī*, p. 272 ff.

[33] For example, see *EI*, XX, p. 127.

[34] *Ibid*, XX, p. 131.

[35] *IA*, XVIII, p. 210 ff.

[36] *IB*, p. 305.

These trends of mediaeval thought brought about the divinization of history. Bhūlokamalla represented the royal heroes—Tailapa II and Vikramāditya VI—as the formal incarnations of Vishṇu, appearing on earth to destroy demons, and thus made the political arena into a play-ground of divine and demoniac forces. Being harassed by the diabolical practices of the Rāshṭrakūṭās, who were demons in human form, the gods assembled in the heaven and headed by Śiva approached Lord Vishṇu with a request to destroy the turbulent demons. Vishṇu, therefore, incarnated himself as Tailapa II and curbed the evil Rāshṭrakūṭas. Similarly Vishṇu appeared on earth again as Vikramāditya VI and put a stop to the evil practices of devils. Thus, *itihāsa*, which in the beginning was an account of past events recorded to illustrate the right course of conduct, under the influences of mediaeval thought, eventually sank into a story of divine victory over the demoniac forces.

CHAPTER V

THE PṚITHVĪRĀJA–VIJAYA OF JAYĀNAKA

ONCE AGAIN, we find a Kashmirian biographer recoun tingtales of a contemporary king in the traditional style. The court-poet who sang the gallant deeds of the Chāhamāna ruler in the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya*, was, like Bilhaṇa, a native of Kashmir. Although the Ms. of the poem does not mention his name, the suggestion that it was Jayānaka is almost certain.[1] Because of the fragmentary character of the Ms., one-third of the epic is lost to us, but the trend in the first, eleventh and twelfth cantos of this incompletely known work, clearly indicates that it was written to laud the victory of Pṛithvīrāja III Chāhamāna over Muizz al-Dīn Muhammad of Ghor, and to celebrate the marriage of the former with a lady born on the banks of the Gaṅgā. The poem was therefore composed sometime between the two battles of Tarain—the first in 1191 when the Chāhamānas scored a glorious victory over the Muslim invader, and the second in 1193[2] when the gallant Pṛithvīrāja met his doom. This inference is corroborated by the fact that the verses of this poem were quoted by Jayaratha[3] who flourished in Kashmir in c.1200.

If we can believe the testimony of the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya*,[4] Jayānaka came from Kashmir to the Chāhamāna court sometime before the first battle of Tarain. He was honoured by the king and held in esteem by the royal bard Pṛithvī-bhaṭa and other officials. He describes himself as "a scholar, poet, and ascetic of deep erudition in the āgamic and Vedic lores."[5] The poem discloses his intimate knowledge of astrology, grammer and logic. It contains a clear allusion to the *Kādambarī*[6] of Bāṇa, though implicit references to other works such as the *Kirātārjunīya*[7] and the

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[1] Har Bilas Sarda, The Pṛithvīrāja-Vijaya, *JRAS*, 1913, p. 261.

[2] *The Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya*, Ed. by Gauri Shankar Hirachand Ojha, Ajmer, 1941, Introduction, p. 2.

[3] *Ibid.*, introduction, p. 2 and fn. 3 and 4.

[4] *Ibid.*, canto XII, 55-73.

[5] *Ibid.*, XII, 63.

[6] *Ibid.*, IV, 14.

[7] *Ibid.*, IV, 2.

Raghuvaṁśa may also be detected. It is however the *Rāmāyaṇa* which exerted the main formative influence on the poem.

In the prologue to his epic, the poet praises Vālmīki together with Vyāsa and Bhāsa,[8] probably to conform to the long-standing convention of literary works. Later however he again makes a mention of the *Ādi-kavi*[9] in a way which suggests his intention of imitating the celebrated poet. He frequently alludes to the characters and incidents of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and the story of Rāma is twice narrated in detail. But it is not in these references nor even in the story of Rāma twice inserted in the text, but in the structure and spirit of the poem that the real impress of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is seen. The entire *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* seems to breathe its influence.

The author, who introduces himself in the later part of the epic as a character of the story, gives a short account of himself. It is said that he was born in the line of the sage Upamanyu and that he was nourished with motherly solicitude by Sāradā, the name by which Sarasvatī the goddess of learning was known in Kashmir. Once, pleased by his devotion, we are told, the goddess gave her blessings and announced that after six lives of constant devotion to her he would share the pleasure of singing the glories of Hari, incarnated in human form as Pṛithvīrāja.[10]

This rhapsodic account betrays an attempt on the part of the author to recreate himself after the image of Vālmīki. Like the latter who, as the tradition goes,[11] was commissioned by Brahmā to compose the biography of Rāma, Jayānaka represents himself as having had the blessings of Śāradā in his pious task of celebrating the life of Pṛithvīrāja in a poem.

The Composition of the Pṛithvīrāja-Vijaya

In the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya*, Jayānaka adroitly blends the history of the Chāhamānas with diverse elements of Puranic legends and tales of mystery. The story of Rāma is used as an archetype for the biography of Pṛithvīrāja. It furthers the theme and forms the background against which the life of Pṛithvīrāja is presented. The Puranic legends and the tales of mystery serve two purposes.

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[8] *Ibid.*, I, 2-6. [9] *Ibid.*, I, 31.
[10] *Ibid.*, XII, 64-73. [11] *Rāmāyaṇa* I, 2, vv. 30-37.

First, they are used as tissues that knit the sprawling history of the Chāhamānas into firm structural units. They thus provide unity to the quadruple construction of the Chāhamāna history which comprises the legendary account of the origin of the Chāhamānas, the story of Vāsudeva, the first Chāhamāna ruler of Śākambharī, the genealogy of his dynasty, and the biography of Pṛithvīrāja. Secondly, they dovetail together the two independent stories of Rāma and Pṛithvīrāja to form an entity. There is, however, a general unity in the epic as all its constituent elements are harmoniously tuned to the sovereign purpose of the poet, to present Pṛithvīrāja in the rôle of Rāma.

The Origin and the Rise of the Vijaya Epics

Born with epics, nurtured with *logoi*, developed through a sense of curiosity, the Greco-Roman tradition of history, which grew out of the Genealogies, flourished in the peripatetic school. Its Indian counterpart, however, followed a different course. In the beginning, the *vaṁśa* literature flowed along with the heroic poetry, but when the Bhṛigvāṅgirases, who had previously subsisted on the tribal economy, became the members of the court organization, the *vaṁśa* literature gradually merged in the epic tradition. But as the traditional institution of bards, still aligned in the tribal manner with the socio-political structure of the ruling families continued, the composition of *vaṁśa* did not altogether cease to exist. It went on meandering at the popular level. The bureaucratic tradition of history in archives which kept the records of the dynasty as a whole, also preserved the *vaṁśa* history at the governmental level. Under the court influence, the latter, of course, gradually shaped itself in accordance with the norms of the imperial school.

Even in these ornate epics, the *vaṁśa* element was not totally effaced. It was simply subordinated to the imperial. Tell-tale references to these epics by their authors still betray their origin. Bāṇabhaṭṭa intended to write the *Harshacharita* as a biography of Harsha with "an account of his ancestors from the beginning of the family (*pūrva-purushavaṁśa*)".[12] The *Vikramāṅkadevacharita* describes itself as 'a necklace made out of jewels in the form of glorious deeds performed by the royal members of the Chālukya family.'[13] Other works of the category also retained *vaṁśa* in varying measures. Padmagupta incidentally inserted a short *Paramāravaṁśa* in the middle of his story, when Ramāṅgada introduced his royal master to the fictitious sage Vaṅku.[14] Someśvara wove the story of Vikramāditya VI in such a way that he could include most of the *Chālukya-vaṁśa* in it. The extant portion of his work appears as an elucidation of the *vaṁśa* preserved in the royal archives of the Chālukyas. It contains all the features of the *vaṁśa*–the description of the *janapada* and the capital city, and the *rājavati* with elaborate titles (*virudas*). To fit in with the idealized portrait of Vikramāditya VI, Someśvara has of course added quite a few imaginative touches here and there. Jayānaka devoted in his epic as many as four chapters to the *vaṁśa* of the Chāhamānas.[15]

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[12] III pp. 139-140.

The source of the *vaṁśa* section of these epics was mainly the historical records kept in the offices of the *Sāndhivigrahikas*. Genealogical accounts in the *Harshacharita*, the *Navasāhasāṅka-charita* and the *Vikramānkadevacharita* are similar in contents to those in the royal charters respectively of the Vardhanas, the Paramāras and the Chālukyas of Kalyāṇī. Further, Jayānaka, who elaborately treats the ancient Chāhamāna history, gives such minor details that one is led to suppose that he was writing on the basis of an already existing *vaṁśa*. The presence of various historical traditions in Chāhamāna territory even before the composition of the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* and the remarkable concordance of the facts recorded in the Bijolia inscription and those in the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* make this view almost certain.

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Of the various types of historical epics, the *vijayas* (victory) come nearest to the heroic tradition of the *itihāsapurāṇa* literature. With all the poetic embellishments and literary conventions, they describe some remarkable victory of the hero over a notable adversary.

Although stray references to wars are found in the Rigvedic poems,[16] and the one which refers to the battle of ten kings under the specific name of *dāśarājña* is charged with picturesque details of the warriors—'the white-robed Tṛitsus, with braided hair'[17]—they are hymns of prayer and praise and not heroic tales of war. The *Devāsuraṁ* of the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*[18] is now lost to us, but the name indicates that it was an *ākhyāna* based on some mythological story relating the strife of gods and demons. Thus unfortunately no heroic tale of war of the Vedic age exists in its original form. Nevertheless, the war–lauds and the tales of battles were popular with the kings and nobles of the age. In the sacredotal literature, not only do we find incidental references to wars and warriors, their ambitions and feelings,—of course, in religious and ritualistic settings—but also sacred injunctions which attest to popularity of the heroic poetry. For instance, on the occasion of the *aśvamedha* sacrifice, the kshatriya lute player was enjoined to sing the glory of the sacrificer with accounts of wars fought and the victories won by him. The nucleus of the Bharata saga was a tale of war. As Lēvi thinks and Nīlakaṇṭha states, it was perhaps significantly named *Jaya.*[19] "The interesting tales of wars and toils" and "the stories heroic deeds of former times" were popular with many a Mahabhārata hero.[20]

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[13] I, 30. [14] XI, 71-90. [15] Cantos IV—VIII.

[16] I, 53; VI, 18; IX 61; VI, 27; VII, 18, 33, 83.

However, the earliest literary epic of this type of which we have some evidence is the *Pātāla-vijaya* or the *Jāmbavati-vijaya*, now lost but ascribed in tradition to Pāṇini, sometimes identified with the famous grammarian of that name.[21] The *Yudhisṭhira-vijaya* of Vāsudeva (9th century) is based upon the story of the *Mahābhārata.*[22] The *Hara-vijaya* composed by Ratnākara, a Kashmirian poet (10th century), tells in fifty cantos the story of the conquest of demons by Śiva.[23]

Contemporary wars also attracted the attention of poet-historians. Besides inscriptions, which give short and sketchy, though sometimes vivid descriptions of such wars, there were historical works, systematically narrating accounts of sanguine warfare but orchestrated with the rhetoric and poetic conventions of the age. They sometimes afford glimpses into the psychology of warring chiefs and generally furnish in an indirect manner information on the social or socio-religious factors leading to wars. The first available work of this kind is the *Gauḍavaho* of Vākpati (8th century), who eulogizes the various victories of Yaśovarmadeva of Kanauj.[24] ~~The~~ *Bhuvanābhyudaya*, now lost, was an epic composed by Śaṅkuka (8th century) in Kashmir.[25] It describes 'the terrible battle between the regents Mamma and Utpala. The expedition of Tailapa II, chālukyan king of Kalyāṇi, against Mūlarāja Solaṅki was the theme of a historical epic written by Padmagupta (10th century).[26] The work has not been recovered, though tradition has bequeathed a few stray verses in the form of quotations.

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[17] VII, 83, 8. [18] *Supra*, pp. 9ff.

[19] Sylvain Lévi, *Tato Jayamudīrayet*, *ABORI*, I, pp. 13-20.

[20] I, 222, 29; XIV, 15, 5-7; N. K. Siddhant, *Heroic Age of India*, 1929, Oxford, p. 58.

[21] M. Krishnamachariar, *History of Classical Sanskrit Literature*, 84-85 but *contra*, *JBBRAS*, XVI, 344.

[22] Ed., by Śivadatta and K. P. Parab (Kāvyamālā, LX) Bombay, 1930.

[23] Ed. by Durgaprasad and K. P. Parab, NSP, Bombay, 1890.

The convention of writing epics on the theme of wars, continued still later. The *Gadyakarṇāmṛita* (13th century) deals with the ninety days' battle at Śrīraṅgam between Narasiṁha II, son of Tribhuvanemalla Vīraballāla of the Hoysāla dynasty, and the combined forces of the Pāṇḍyas, the Pallavas and others.[27] In the *Madhurā-vijaya* (14th century) the queen Gaṅgādevī has left for us the story of the conquest and capture of Madurai by her husband Kumāra Kampana.[28]

Some of the *Vijaya* epics of the early mediaeval age, however, incorporated the features of the *Charita* and became very similar to the latter. Thus, the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* is not merely a *vijaya* epic dealing with the war and ultimate triumph of Pṛithvīrāja III. It also fully partakes of the nature of a *charita*, in treating the biography of the hero from his birth, though it must have evidently culminated in his glorious triumph over Muizz al-Dīn

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[24] Ed. by S. P. Pandit, Sanskrit and Prakrit Series, XXXIV, Bombay, 1887.

[25] Kalhaṇa, *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, IV, 704-705.

[26] See *Subhāshitāvalī of Vallabhadeva*, ed. by Peterson and Durga Prasad, Bombay, 1836, pp. 51-53 for some of the verses from this work.

[27] Krishnamachariar, *op. cit.*, p. 447.

[28] Ed. by S. Thiruvenkatachari, Annamalai University, 1957.

Muhammad of Ghor in 1181 at Tarain. Likewise it incorporates the characteristics of the *vaṁśa* epic also.

Traditions of Historical Writings under the Chāhamānas

Although much is lost beyond any hope of recovery, the remaining literature is sufficient to indicate that there was a strong tradition of historical writing in the kingdom of Śākambharī under the Chāhamānas even before the composition of the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya*. We may not here take into account the Gujrat chronicles such as the *Dvayāśraya-Kāvya* of Hemachandra, and a long series of biographies of Kumārapāla composed later, which touch on Chāhamāna history incidentally and from the view-points of Solaṁkīs of Gujrat. Even the irretrievably lost *Arṇava-varṇana* of Śrīharsha may not have been a historical work on the Chāhamāna king Arṇorāja, as Bhandarkar contends.[29] But the fragmentary Ajmer inscription belonging probably to the period of Vigraharāja IV should reasonably be regarded as part of an introduction to some historical epic dealing with the achievements of some Chāhamāna king, possibly the contemporary ruler Vigraharāja IV.[30] To the same period again belongs the historical play the *Lalita-Vigraharāja*.[31] This was written by Somadeva to commemorate the victory of Vigraharāja IV over a Muslim invader to be identified with the Ghaznavite Amīr *Khusrau Shāh* (1153-1160).[32] The internal evidence of the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* also bears out the fact that a powerful tradition of historical works existed in the territory. This age, characterized by martial spirit and chivalry, naturally saw the springtide efflorescence of the bardic lore. The royal bard Pṛithvī-bhaṭa was evidently a historical figure, though his identification with Chanda baliddaya, the *dvāra-bhaṭa* of Pṛithvīrāja III may be doubted. He is described in the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* as an expounder of hundreds of *itihāsa* episodes, and his speech is characterized as 'purified' due to his training in *itihāsa*. The *Bīsaladeo-Raso* of Narapati Nālha[33] composed on the theme of Vigraharāja III or IV may be a later fabrication, and so also some of the recensions of the *Pṛithvīrāja-Raso*. But it can hardly be denied that Chanda Baliddaya, who is mentioned in the *Purātana-Prabandha-Saṁgraha*, was also a historical figure and that he composed a work on the life of Pṛithvīrāja III.[34]

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[29] IA, XLII, p. 84 but *contra*, Aufrecht, *Catalogue Catalogoram*, I, p. 31; Krishnamachariar, *op. cit*., p. 181, A.N. Jani, *A Critical Study of Śrī Harsha's Naishadhīya Charita*, pp. 110-111.

[30] *EI*, XXIX pp. 180 ff.

[31] *IA*, XX, 201 ff, Kielhorn, *Bruchstücke indischer Sihauspiele* (Inschriften zu Azmere, 1901) *JRAS*, 1902, pp. 439 f.

[32] Dasharath Sharma *op. cit*., p. 61 and fn. 34.

Kadambavāsa, the chief minister of Pṛithvīrāja III is described as *Sabhā-vyāsa*. Since he was commissioned to preside over a scholarly debate between two Jain pontiffs Padmaprabha and Jinapati Suri, he must have been a scholar of some distinction. He belonged to the stock of Dāhimas which had carved out small principalities in some parts of Rājasthan and which was very closely related to the Dādhicha brāhmaṇas who, as we have seen were associated with the Bhārgavas.

The Lalita-Vigraharāja and the Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya

The pattern of the love-story in the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* is traditional and seems to have been borrowed from the *Lalita-Vigraharāja*. This incompletely discovered drama on the life of Vigraharāja IV opens with a dialogue between the royal hero and the *vidushaka* in which the former describes the charms of a beautiful maiden seen by him in a dream. The king, of course, had fallen headlong in love and was pining for her. Suddenly Śubhananda, a scholar from the famous Tarkkāri settlement of the Brāhmanas in the Madhyadeśa, appears on the stage. The scholar vividly describes and later on portrays the figure of Desaladevī, a princess of uncommon beauty, in whom the king discovers the lady of his dream. Curiously enough, Desaladevī, the daughter of the prince Vasautapāla, was also in love with the king Vigraharāja IV. She managed to send her confidante Śaśiprabhā to ascertain the feelings of Vigraharāja towards her. Through Śaśiprabhā, the king was apprised of the tender feelings of Desaladevī, but he could do no more than send his friend Kalyāṇavatī to the princess with the message that his march against the Turushkas, a battle against whom appeared to be impending, would soon give him an opportunity of joining her. Here the play breaks off and later on the operations against the *mlechchhas* are described. Although the play is not complete and the available portion does not mention the result of this trial of strength between the Muslims and the Chāhamānas, the trend of the play and the literary convention of the historical works of the time, make it almost certain that Vigraharāja IV was described as having defeated the Turushkas and married the princess Desaladevī.

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[33] *Ibid.*, p. 339.

[34] Ed. by Jinavijaya Muni, SJGM., introduction, p. 9 f.

Jayānaka, as we shall see, adopts the same pattern. Pṛithvīrāja III as depicted in the twelfth canto as languishing in love for Tilottamā, the divine damsel, when Jayānaka a poet-scholar gifted with mystic powers, appeared and informed the minister Kadambavāsa and the royal bard Pṛithvībhaṭa, that out of love for Pṛithvirāja-Rama, Tilottamā had incarnated herself on the banks of the Ganga. Linked up with it, is again the story of a war between Pṛithvīrāja III and Muizz al-Dīn Muhammad of Ghor.

The Chāhamana Culture-Complex and The Historical Works

Besides resemblance in the development of theme, both the *Lalita-Vigraharāja* and the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* display similar socio-political trends governing the ideas of historical development of the age. Vigraharāja IV, the patron of Somadeva, was the first Chāhamāna ruler of Śākambhāri to conquer the northern region, including Delhi—the threshold of India. Having placed himself at the entrance to Madhyadeśa from the north-west, he had to assume the onerous responsibility of meeting the challenges so persistently thrown out by the seemingly interminable chain of Muslim invaders.[35] This menace from the north-west, though it was not fully realized, was dimly seen by him and his successors. The psychology and the motives of Muslim invaders are described and explained by nearly contemporary muslim historians. These two Chāhamāna works served as the Hindu counterpart of Muslim chronicles and give us in their own way, the earliest reactions of the indigenous people against Muslim invaders.

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[35] *Purātana-prabandha-saṁgraha*, p. 88.

The infiltration of foreigners into India was not a new story. Since 2nd century B. C. it was treated more or less as a socio-religious problem. The disintegration of indigenous political structure and the concomitant decline of the traditional religions through the onslaught of the foreigners, initially evoked the idea of regress with the attendant inert pessimism and frustration, followed by a cohesion of indigenous elements united or the basis of socio-religious consciousness.

After the disintegration of the Gupta empire, the early mediaeval age was ushered in against the dark and sombre background of the Kali-age, described in inscriptions, *Purāṇas*, later *Smṛitis* and *Āgamas*. The theory of Kali-age exerted considerable influence on the development of mediaeval culture. Pictures of the Kali-age portrayed in terrifying colours are given in several *Purāṇas*.[36] Obviously they contain several strata belonging to different periods. The later *Smṛitis*[37] also dilate upon the evil propensities and customs of Kali. With the help of inscriptions, the socio-religious and political context of these descriptions in the works of the mediaeval period may be studied. The Mandasor inscription of Yaśodharman dated in 532 informs us of "the age which is the ravisher of good behaviour" when "kings adopted reprehensible course of conduct" and consequently when "the earth was afflicted by kings; who manifested pride, who were cruel through want of training, who from *moha* transgressed the path of good conduct, and who were destitute of virtuous delights."[38] Similarly other inscriptions record with a note of dissatisfaction and distress that "virtuous conduct has to bow low before the full grown kali"[39] and that "the earth like a broken boat, being shaken in the storms of Kali, was sinking below in the invisible ocean of nether regions."[40] Besides these general statements, inscription record the extirpation of *varṇāśrama*, decrease in the popularity of Vedic rites and lastly the transgression of the right course of conduct. The figure of the quadruped *dharma* reduced to the straits of a lame person with one leg was the natural corollary which developed gradually during this period.[41]

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[36] *Vāyu*, Ch. 58 and 99; *Matsya*, 144; *Kūrma* I, 30; *Vishṇu*, VI, 1-2; *Bhāgavata* XII, 2, etc. See R.C. Hazra, *Studies in the Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customes*, Dacca, 1940, pp. 207, 217. See also D. R. Patil, *The Cultural History from Vāyu Purāṇa*, Poona, 1946, p. 200.

[37] *Paāśara*, I, 17; *Bṛihatpārāśara*, I, 33-34; *Kapila Saṁhita*, vv. 4, 17-18; *Smṛiti-saṁdarbha*, pp. 2529-2530.

[38] D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, Vol. I, p. 393.

[39] *EI*. XIV, 117. [40] *EI*. XIV, 115.

The Mandasor inscription, alluding to the rival king Mihirakula by name, very strongly suggests that "by other kings who adopted a reprehensible course of conduct" the poet meant the Hūṇa potentates and similar other outlandish kings. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* after mentioning kings of the Gupta dynasty in general, describes the barbarous chiefs bereft of spiritual glow (*brahma-varchasva*) who would rule over the banks of the Sindhu, the Chandrabhāgā valley, Kānti and Kashmir.[42] Coins and inscriptions of Tóramāṇa testify to his rule over Uttar Pradesh, Rājasthan, the Punjab and Kashmir. According to the *Kuvalayamālā*, he lived at Pawaya on the banks of the Chandrabhāgā.[43] Therefore it seems that in the portions of the *Purāṇas* dealing with post-Gupta history, the *mlechchhas* recorded as ruling at the advent of the kali-age were the Hūṇas and kindred outlandish kings.

The disintegration of the Gupta empire and the decline in the Vedico-āgamic religious order, brought about a sense of frustration in society which such empire-builders as Harsha, Yaśodharman and others tried to check. Bāṇa saw in the reign of his patron, the return of the good old age of Kṛita.[44] The panegyrist of Yaśodharman, as also some of the other eulogists, speak in the some vein.

After nearly 200 years of freedom from serious attack the Muslims followed the Hūṇas. They were treated just as one tribe of the *mlechchhas* in the long series of the invading foreigners. The *Lalita-Vigraharāja* refers to their destructive, iconoclastic and sacrilegous activities—the desecration of holy places, destruction of temples and the oppression of persons belonging to Hindu religion—in the same manner as the Purāṇa writers recorded the barbarous acts of the Hūṇas. The solution proposed by the historian of the age is contained in the Delhi–Siwalik Pillar inscription of Vigraharāja IV which says, "by repeatedly exterminating the *mlechchhas*, having once more made Āryāvarta what its name signifies, i. e., the land of the Āryas,–victorious is the lord Vīsaladeva, the ruler of Śākambharī."[45]

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[41] *IB*, III, p. 48 v. 24; *EI*, I, p. 219.

[42] XII, I, 39.

[43] *JBORS*, XIV, 28 ff.

[44] *HC*, III, 139-140; See also *Select Inscriptions*, pp. 279, 420-21.

The *Pṛithvīraja-vijaya* draws the problem in a much higher relief. It dramatically starts with the dialogue of Brahmā and Vishṇu in which the former gives an account of the atrocities perpetrated by the *mlechchhas* in the holy land of Pushkara and makes a fervent appeal to Vishṇu to incarnate himself in order to destroy the *mlechchhas* and restore the pristine purity of the sacred land. The temples were desecrated by the armies of the *mlechchhas*, the holy water of the lake at Vushkara polluted by *mlechchhas* women, and the people following the traditional good path oppressed by barbarians. In response to this, Vishṇu created a hero Chāhamāna as the *Sūtradhāra* or stage-manager to complete the preliminaries of the drama of the extirpation of the *mlechchhas* by Vṛithvīrāja III, the incarnation of Vishṇu–Rāma.[46]

The *Pṛithvīrāja–vijaya* in fact becomes the story of religious disorder created by the *mlechchhas* and the restoration of traditional good faith by the Chāhamāna hero. The theory of the incarnation of God for the elimination of evil-doers, further lends it a complexion of mystery play and the identification of Pṛithvīrāja III with Rāma and of the *mlechchhas* with the demon-followers of Rāvaṇa completes the Rāmāyanization of history. Of course, this trend of Rāmāyanization is just a part of the divinization of the historical process—a feature noted earlier—and was due to the transcendental world-view of the mediaeval age.

In short, both these works devote themselves to a contemporary problem, though in their understanding and exposition of it, they give evidence of the great influence of the *itihasa-purāṇa* tradition. Further, Somadeva, Jayānaka and the writer of the fragmentary *Kāvya*-inscription[47] discovered at Ajmer, laid the foundation of an imperial tradition of Chāhamāna history and thus attempted to improve, improvize and standardize—though in a way distort—the bardics tories and the popular tradition which existed before them.

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[45] *IA*, XIX, 1890, 215, inscription C, verse 1. [46] I, 37-77.

[47] *EI*, XXIX, 178 ff.

The Tradition of Imperial History and the Origin of the Chāhamānas

A simple, matter-of-fact and direct tradition in popular writings on the Chāhamāna history gradually became transfigured into ornate and embellished compositions, decked out with all the literary and mythological artifices.

Nowhere is this process better displayed than in the writings on the origin and rise of the dynasty. The distant past partly obliterated from the memory of the people and only dimly known to the poet-historian himself, naturally afforded an opportunity to the Muse for an imaginative flutter. Here, the poet was comparatively free from historical bondage and could provide with ease an imperical setting to the dynasty of his royal patrons.

There are two accounts of the origin of the Chāhamānas. The popular tradition preserved in a private record at Bijolia, attempts to trace their origin from Sāmanta, a *vipra* belonging to Vatsa *gotra* and living at Ahichchhatrāpura in Ananta (a tract near Haras in Shekhavati).[48] This tradition continues in the Jodhpur branch of the Chāhamānas. The Sundha hill inscription of the time of Chāchigadeva (1261-1281), the Chāhamāna king of Jalor (Jodhpur), dated in 1262, states, that the hero Chāhamāna sprang up from an eye of the sage Vatsa.[49] The Devra branch also adhered to it. The Abu inscription of Luntigadeva dated V. S. 1377 significantly records "Formerly, the illustrious families of the Sun and the moon were eminent upon earth. On their extermination, the sage Vachchha, through fear of crime, meditated profoundly. From his meditation in holy combination with the moon, there appeared on earth the hero Chāhamāna, who destroyed the demons and pleased the sage Vatsa. Being a disciple of Vatsa, he was known as Vātsya."[50] A late Hindi work, *Kyām-Khān-Raso*, which recounts the history of the Qiwām Khani, closely associated with the Chāhamānas, reiterates the tradition.[51]

The account of the solar origin of the line occurs for the first time in the Ajmer stone inscription, probably of the time of Vigraharāja IV.[52] In the line initiated by the Sun, the inscription reads, such universal monarchs as Ikshvāku and Rāma flourished and in due course of time they were followed by Chāhamāna who, like the full-moon, whitened the whole universe by his fame." As we have noted, the inscription is in a highly embellished style and its nature makes it obvious that it formed part of an introduction to a historical epic dealing with the achievements of some Chāhamāna hero. The inscription is evidently a royal record composed by an unknown court-poet.

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[48] *EI*, XXVI, pp. 84 ff; verse 12.

[49] *Ibid.*, IX, p. 74 verse 4.

[50] *Asiatic Researches*, XVI, p. 285.

[51] Dasharath Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[52] *EI*, XXIX, pp. 178 ff. verse 37.

The account of solar origin is found further in the Badla inscription of Pṛithvīraja III dated in 1177-78 A.D., which states that "a hero named Chāhamāna emanated from the sun."[53]

The *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* develops this tradition with all mythological details. The moment Brahmā concluded his report of the atrocities perpetrated by the Muslims, a fiery column (*āgneya-liṅga*) shot forth from the sun—the right eye of Vishṇu—and descended down on the earth. It assumed the form of a man wearing an ecklace of pearls decked with an emerald in the centre, crown and armlets. He excelled other sons of the god Sūrya—Manu, Sāvarṇi-Śanischara, Yama, Revanta and others. From the initial letters of the *chāpa* (bow) which he held in hand, *Hari*, the god, whom he constantly kept in his mind, *Māna* (self-confidence) in his own strength and the *naya* or the polity which characterized his ministers, he was called Chāhamāna. The hero founded a new dynasty.[54]

As the genealogical accounts of the Ikshvākus, preserved in the Purāṇas, were widely known, Jayānaka could not engraft the hero Chāhamāṇa directly on the Ikshvāku line. Basing his argument on the theory of the four *yugas* revolving in a cyclic motion, he advanced the view that the same Ikshvāku line which flourished in the *kṛita* age, was rejuvenated in Kali by Chāhamāna. To complete the entire gamut of mythology, he states that in the *kṛta* age the Ikshvākus had three *pravaras*, but with the advent of Chāhamāna they came to possess the four *pravaras* of Rāma, Ikshvāku, Raghu and Chāhamāna.[55]

As seen elsewhere, the process of standardization necessitated the formation of a new layer of mythology and this we find in historical novels and inscriptions of the early mediaeval period.[56] This layer rests upon numerous mythologico-historical strata contained in the *itihāsapurāṇa* tradition and Vedic literature. In the early centuries of the age under review, the emergence of new dynasties was explained on the basis of the *brahma-kshatra* theory. The origin of the Pallavas, the Kadambas, the Paramāras, the Senas and some of the ruling dynasties of South East Asia, is associated with this *brahma-kshatra* theory in one way or the other.[57] Later on, however, in the records of some of these dynasties a tendency to align them with ancient lines of the kshatriyas, and not to acknowledge the brahmanical connection, is clearly perceptible. Thus, after the Pratihāras had attained imperial status, they suppressed brahmanical associations in their records and flaunted instead their Ikshvāku origin.[58] The Chāhamāna records reveal the same tendeney. The popular tradition, which explains their origin on the basis of the *brahma-kshatra* theory, seems to be earlier, though it is found for the first time in the Bijolia inscription set up by a Jain monk during the reign-period of Someśvara (c. 1070-1078). After Vigraharāja IV conquered Delhi and attained imperial status, the court-poets who tried to build an imperial tradition of the Chāhamāna history, came out with this new-fangled theory of their solar origin.

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[53] Badla inscription of Pṛīthvīrāja III; 11, 2-3, Dasharath Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

[54] I, 75-76; II, 1-43. [55] II, 71.

The story as given in the *Pṛithvīraja-vijaya* is the first attempt at the formation of this new mythology and is therefore rather crude. The premise that the hero Chāhamāha emanated from the sun and therefore was the direct offspring of the sun like Revanta and Vama does not in any way warrant the conclusion that he was a descendant of king Ikshvāku, the grandson of Sūrya through Manu. Nor does the fact that the Ikshvākus, the Kshatriyas of the solar origin, flourished in the *kṛita* age—long before the Chāhamānas with their professed lineage—,make the latter descendants of the former. Further the epigraphical evidence as also the living traditions of the Chāhamāna families, make them out as of Vatsa *gotra* and thus directly contradict the statement of the court-poet that the Chāhamānas had the four *pravaras* of Rāma, Ikshvāku, Raghu and Chāhamāna was never considered as a *pravara* and does not figure in the *pravara* lists.

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[56] *Infra*, pp. 283 ff. [57] *Infra*, pp. 282-283. [58] *Infra*, pp. 282 ff.

Here the difference between the modern historian with his technique of scientific enquiry and the mediaeval poet-historian of the Age of Faith, steeped in the tradition of Vedico-āgamic culture based upon the intrinsic authoritativeness of the revealed word, becomes manifest. Jayānaka did not care to remove the mythological accretion from historical core—a problem which, in fact, would have been for a modern historian the starting point of his investigation. But the distinction between history and mythology was not clearly realized in that age. Mediaeval man believed mythological stories as historically true. Śankarāchārya, who flourished a few centuries before Jayānaka, discusses the authoritativeness of the *itihāsa purāṇa* tradition and the historicity of mythological stories narrated in it. He observes, "One who admits the authoritativeness of the spiritual word has no right to deny that the shape of Indra, and the other gods, is such as we understand it from the *mantras* and *arthavāda* which possess authoritative power, are capable of describing real personality of the gods. *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇas* can besides, be considered as based on perception also. For what is not accessible to our perception may have been within the sphere of the perception of people in ancient times. *Smṛiti* also declares that Vyāsa and others conversed with gods face to face. A person maintaining that the people of ancient times were no more able to converse with the gods than people at present, would thereby deny (the incontestible) variety of the world. He might as well maintain that because there is at present no prince ruling over the whole earth, there were no such princes in former times—a position by which the scriptural injunction of the *rājasūya* sacrifice would be stultified.... The general result is that we have the right to conceive the gods as possessing personal existence on the ground of *mantras*, *arthavādas*, *itihāsas*, *purānas* and ordinarily prevailing ideas."[59] Like the *mīmāṁsakas*, Jayānaka tried to give a consistent and intelligent explanation of mythology in the context of the Chāhamāna history. He was interested in reconciling the claims of the Chāhamānas—a dynasty of the Kali age—to solar lineage with the ancient tradition which described the solar dynasty of the Ikshvākus as having flourished in *Kṛita*.

[59] *Śaṁkara Bhāshya* on the *Vedānta Sūtra*, I, 3, 33.

Besides, this new mythology served two purposes. The first, which is connected with the theme of the poem, is that the poet made an all-out attempt to represent Pṛithvīraja III as Rāma, and in order to create the semblance of identity, the co-relation of the Ikshvākus with the Chāhamānas was useful. The second—and this is general and more important—is that out of a sub-conscious feeling of inferiority, the newly born aristocracies wished themselves to be haloed in the romantic and respectable aura of the ancient Kshatriya order.

This further leads us to an important change in ancient historiography. The Bhṛigvāṅgiras group of Brāhmaṇas were intimately connected with the *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition. The emergence of new ruling dynasties having a professed connection with them, indicated their further hold on the body-politic in general and historiography in particular. But gradually, these royal families concealed their brahmanical association. The Vākāṭākas who had flourished earlier called themselves throughout Vishṇuvṛiddhas and never disowned their brahmanical origin. But although the earlier Kadambas styled themselves 'Hārītiputra' and claimed brahmanical origin, the later rulers of the dynasty attributed the rise of the family to Trilochana Kadamba who is said to have sprung from a drop of sweat that fell to the earth near the roots of a Kadamba tree from the fore-head of the god Śiva.[60] The Chālukyas in spite of their constant epithet 'Hārītiputra' incongruously traced their lineage back to the Ikshvākus.[61] Likewise, the Chāhamānas tried to discredit the fact known to the popular tradition that they belonged to Vatsa *gotra*, and started to popularize their solar origin.

This was possible only when the Bhṛigvāṅgiras tradition had loosened its grip over historiography. Epigraphs, however, supply evidence that they received royal patronage in various parts of the country, composed royal eulogies, and occupied the office of "the expounder of texts on traditional polity." Still it seems that they were overwhelmed by the court culture, dominated at this time by reckless heroism and gallant chivalry, and therefore they could not but let the brahmanical tradition sink into insignificance.

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[60] *Infra* pp. 204 ff.
[61] *Infra* pp. 282 ff.

Many of them were relegated to the minor jobs such as the recitation of the *Mahābhārata* and similar texts of religious and political import. Further, the court-poet and the court-bard, with their different conventions and ideals, gave a new turn to the composition of history. The bardic lore couched in local dialects and expressing popular heroism specially appealed to that influential section of the court which understood the flash of swords better than the illumination of the traditional lore. It therefore promoted the tradition of historical writing in the direct and forceful stylc of heroic poetry, though in a euologistic vein and with a marked emphasis on chivalry. The court-poet allegedly played the tune chosen by the king and his entourage. This court-history changes dramatically both in background and colour with the varying fortunes of the ruling family. After the attainment of imperial status, royal houses wished themselves to be portrayed with all the imperial awe and grandeur, and the poet versed in the classics lent them the complexion of classical emperors. The new mythology was the creation of the court-poets and rests upon the earlier stratum of Vatsa origin. The change further marks the point where the earlier historical tradition develops into the imperial school of Chāhamāna history. It not only carried the legacy of myth-making but also further augmented it by literary devices. The imperial history, as we shall see, was different from the traditional chronicles, not so much in spirit as in form.

Literary and Mythological Devices of the Imperial Tradition: The Story of Vāsudeva

Epic writings on the rise of the dynasty clearly evince the conventions and motifs of mediaeval historical works through which the imperial tradition transformed ancient accounts and bardic lores to suit the taste of the nobility and to glorify the ruling dynasty. The Bijolia inscription, which enshrines the earlier tradition, describes Sāmanta, the Brāhmaṇa chief of Ananta, as the founder of the Śākambharī branch.[62] The *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya*, the *Prabandhakośa*[63]

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[62] *EI*, XXIX, pp. 179 ff.

[63] Ed. by Jinavijaya Muni, SJGM. VI, 1935. Appendix II, pp. 133-134.

(v.s. 1405), the *Hammira-Maha Kāvya*[64] (c. 1315 A.D. and the *Surjanacharita*[65] (c. 16th century A.D.) attribute the rise of the family to his predecessor Vāsudeva. The account of Vāsudeva as given in the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* is considerably different from those of the two later epics, the *Hammīra-Mahākāvya* and the *Surjana-charita*. Both of them describe the dynasty as Vasudeva Dīkshita. The appelation *dīkshita* is rather curious. At least from the 10th century A.D. it occurs as a surname of Brāhmaṇas. According to Śabarasvāmīn, only a person who performed the *dīkshaṇīya-ishṭi* could bear the distinctive title of *dīkshita*.[66] The scriptures prescribe a rigid set of rules for regulating his conduct in socio-religious matters. This brahmanical and ritualistic epithet fits well with the earlier tradition of the Bijolia record, which regards Sāmanta, a descendant of Vāsudeva, as a chief belonging to the caste of Brāhmaṇa. There is no ostensible motive—poetical or political—for the deliberate insertion of the surname in these epics. It is therefore likely that they followed some earlier tradition in describing him as *dīkshita*.

The account of Vāsudeva in the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* assumes the form of a tale in which supernatural characters figure and mysterious occurrences happen. It is said that Vāsudeva, the founder of the Śākambharī branch of the Chāhamānas, constructed a mansion in the heart of a forest. Once, returning from a hunting expedition, he entered into it and found a divine person sleeping on his bed. A magic pill which, suddenly slipping from his mouth, rolled down to the feet of Vāsudeva, revealed him to be a Vidyādhara. When he awoke, the Vidyādhara became disconsolate at the loss of his magic pill, which gave him the power to fly in the air. Vāsudeva, however, returned his pill. With the intention of doing a good turn for this favour, Vidyādhara asked Vāsudeva to send his army back to his capital, to plant his lance on the ground at sunset, and to ride away in the direction of his capital without ever looking back. He then rode away at full speed, but suddenly, hearing the rippling sound of waves, he looked back to find a stream of water surging from the earth behind him. The Vidyādhara appeared again, and addressing him said, "Like a lover who imprints nail-marks on the body of his consort in a love-frolic, you planted the lance on the earth. This amorous overture made the earth perspire and thus created the salt-lake which will be protected by Āśāpurī (the tutelary goddess of the Chāhamānas) and Śākambharī (the goddess named after Śakambhara, the father of the Vidyādhara)." He added that the lake would always be in the possession of the king Vāsudeva and his descendants.[67]

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[64] Ed. by Nilkanth Janardan Kirtane, Bombay, 1879, Canto I, 27.

[65] Ed. by J.B. Chaudhuri, Calcutta, 1951. I, v. 9.

[66] On the *Jaiminī-Sūtra* V. 3, 31.

This account in fact contains two inter-linked stories of the favour of the Vidyādhara and the formation of the salt-lake. Vidyādhara's tales were very popular during this period. To introduce historical episodes in the garb of such stories was quite a common practice—a literary convention of the age, almost always followed by poet-historians intent on glorifying the families of their patrons. Bāṇa, Padmagupta and Bilhaṇa inserted such tales in their epics. It is, however, after the model of the Pushyabhūti episode of the *Harshacharita*, that Jayānaka fashioned this tale of mystery. In an attempt to assist a Pāśupata ascetic who later on attained the status of a Vidyādhara, the king Pushyabhūti destroyed Śrīkaṇṭha, the *nāga*, who held sway over the Śrīkaṇṭha territory. Vāsudeva, likewise, obtained the favour of a Vidyādhara and thus became the ruler over Śākambharī, named after Śakambhara, the father of the Vidyādhara. As in the *Harshacharita*, the name of the *janapada* Śrīkaṇṭha was traced to the *nāga* of that name, so also in the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya*, an attempt is made to connect Śākambharī with a legendary supernatural being Śakambhara. The Pushyabhūti episode differs from the Vidyādhara story of the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* in one insignificant respect that in the place of the sleeping Vidyādhara, it tells the uncanny tale of Vetāla-rites. But the purpose, technique and spirit of both stories are similar.

The second part of the story of Vasudeva, which relates to the formation of the lake, is based upon a folk-tale formula consisting in the blessing bestowed on a hero who is promised that he will rule over a certain area encompassed by him on horse-back in a limited period. That this folk-tale formula was known in

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[67] Canto IV.

Rājasthan much before the composition of the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya*, is evidenced by the Sevadi inscription of the Chāhamāna Ratnapāla, dated in 1115 A. D. Giving an account of the Gundakūrchchā settlement, the inscription relates the following story. In the beginning of the Kali age, Jājūka, the king of Kānyakubja donated to a Brāhmaṇa, named Govinda, the whole tract of land which he could encircle by riding over it in the fourth *prahara* of a day.[68] A similar tradition is associated with the formation of the Śākambharī kingdom in bardic tales and epics. According to the short recension of the *Pṛithvīrāja Raso*, Mānikyarāja was the founder of the Śākambharī branch of the Chāhamānas.[69] Tod in 1823 recorded a tradition about Manikyarāja as known from bardic annals. "Manik Rai fled, pursued by his foe, the goddess Śākambharī appeared to him and bade him establish himself in the spot where she manifested herself, guaranteeing to him the possession of all the ground he could encompass with his horse on that day, but commanded him not to look back until he had returned to the spot where he left her. He commenced the circuit with what he deemed his steed could accomplish, but forgetting the injunction, he was surprised to see the whole space covered as with a sheet. This was the desiccated *sirr*, a salt lake, which he named after his patroness Śākambharī, whose statue still exists on a small island in the lake now corrupted to Sāmbhara."[70] This tradition recurs in the latest recension of the *Pṛithvīrāja Raso*, where the goddess Śākambharī is replaced by the god Śakambhara.[71]

The bardic tradition is simply the folk-tale formula applied to the foundation of the Chāhamāna kingdom. But the Vāsudeva episode, although it is based on the same bed-rock, modifies it in order to dovetail it with the Vidyādhara story. But the modification was not thorough and complete and therefore the incongruous vestiges lay embedded in the revised version. Thus, the king did not make the circuit but rode straight away to the capital. Nor was the salt lake formed owing to the king's violation of the injunction that he should ride away without ever looking back. On the other hand, the moment Vāsudeva planted his lance, the salt water gushed up and the lake was created out of the perspiration of the earth. Curiously enough, even then Jayānaka mentions the injunction of never looking back while riding away to the capital, and its violation by the king. In the bardic story, it was significant because the violation of the divine injunction transformed the land into a lake, but in the Vāsudeva episode it is not only superfluous but confusing.[72] Thus, the structure and treatment of the Vāsudeva episode indicate that the bardic tale was known to Jayānaka and that he embellished it by introducing the Vidyādhara story and other ornate features of the epic.

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[68] Sevadi Copper Plates of Chāhamāna Ratnapāla V. S. 1176, *EI.* XI, p. 311, LL. 34-36.

[69] Pṛithvīrāja Raso Kā Laghutama Rūpāntara, *Rājasthāna Bhāratī*, April 1954, I, p. 12. In all the four recensions of the *Raso*, Māṇikyarāja is mentioned as the dynast.

[70] Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, Ed. by W. Crooke, Oxford, 1920, Vol. III, 1449.

[71] Nagarī Prachāriṇī Sabhā Edition, Samaya 57 vv. 211-213. p. 1493.

This tale of Vāsudeva, like the earlier one of the hero Chāhamāna, attempts to give a rational though mythological interpretation of the racial or regional appelations of the family. Such explanations are found in the *Purāṇas* and were quite common in the historical writings of the period. For example, the name Kadamba is explained in a series of legends, contained in inscriptions. Sometimes the Kadambas are said to have derived their descent from the four-armed and three-eyed god Kadamba, who sprang into existence from a drop of sweat that fell from the forehead of Śiva whereas on other occasions, the founder of the line Mayūraśarmman also styled Mayuravarmman, is described as having born under a *kadamba* tree.[73]

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[72] In fact, Jayānaka fused here two motifs—the first, the folk-tale formula of encompassing a particular area on horse-back within a specified time, and the second, "the lance-water motif" which explains the creation of a river, a stream a spring or a lake on the basis of a thrust or a stroke of a lance; staff or a trident by a divine; semi-drive or a person with supernatural powers. For the second motif, see the interesting article of Dr. F. D. K. Bosch, Guru, Trident and Spring, *Selected Studies in Indonesian Archaeology*, Hague, 1961, pp. 156-170.

[73] George M. Moraes, The *Kadamba-Kula*, pp. 6-8.

The tale of Vasudeva and the Vidyādhara Śakambhara is a similar attempt. It is fabricated to explain the clan-designation Śākambharī of the Chāhamānas.

Śākambharī as the name of a goddess occurs as early as *circa* 5th century A. D. in the *Devi-Māhātmya* of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*.[74] Much earlier in the *Atharvaveda*, the word 'Śakambhara' occurs as the name of a region, or people inhabiting the region near Bactria.[75] Sometime in the course of their history, the Chāhamānas came to be associated with it and the connection lingered on in the form of the clan-name, the tutelary goddess Śākambharī and even the patron god of the Chāhamānas named Śakambhara in the *Pṛithvīrāja Rāso*.

Traditions of the Chāhamāna Vaṁśa

The material for Chāhamāna *vaṁśa* is richer than for many of the royal dynasties of ancient times. This gives it an additional advantage as a source for the study of the poetic working of the *vaṁśa* lore. There are six accounts of the Chāhamāna genealogy; two inscriptions discovered at Haras in Shekhavati[76] (973 A.D.) and Bijolia,[77] the three epics, the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* the *Hammīra-mahākāvya*[78] and the *Śūrajana-charita*,[79] and the *Prabandha-kośa*[80] give the list of Chāhamāna rulers in part or full. The three epics mark the three later stages in the writing of the Chāhāmana history. The *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* was written in the heyday of the Chāhamāna rule under Pṛithvīrāja III. The *Hammīra-mahākāvya* is the product of the 14th century when the embers of the Chāhamāna heroism, though fast dying, could still warm a poet to the noble theme of their struggle against the alien power. The *Śūrajanacharita* was composed in the 16th century, when the early tradition of Chāhamāna history was considerably distorted. The *Śūrajanacharita* could correctly trace the genealogy only up to Vigraharāja II (973 A.D.), and the *Hammīra-mahākāvya* to Gūvāka II (c. 875 A.D.),[81] whereas the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* gives an accurate account of kings from Sāmanta, the feudatory chieftain of Ananta in c. 675 A.D. This evidently shows that an accurate list of kings was kept under the Chāhamānas and that it was known to Jayānaka. But due to political vicissitudes, it was lost, leaving only wrong, distorted and fragmentary sources to later writers. That the complete list was unavailable after the Muslim conquest of Ajmer is further evidenced by the nature of the Chāhamāna genealogy compiled in the fifth decade of the 13th century A.D., which is now preserved as a sequel to the *Prabandha-kośa*. This is framed by joining two fragmentary lists. The first runs from Vāsudeva to Durlabharāja and then, leaving five generations, the second continues from Vākpatirāja (incorrectly spelt in the ms. as Vatsarāja) to Jaitrasiṁha. Thus with the destruction of the Chāhamāna house of Ajmer and later that of Ranthambhor, the historical traditions of the Chāhamāṇas were partially lost and in due course of time they got distorted. Even with the help of the remaining *aitihya*,[82] Nayachandra in the 14th century could not give a correct list as Jayānaka had done two centuries earlier.

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[74] *Infra* pp. 246 ff. [75] *Infra* p. 247 fn.

[76] *EI*, II, pp. 120ff, vv. 13-26. [77] *Ibid.*, XXVI. 103 vv. 12-26.

[78] Cantos I-II. [79] Cantos I-XII. [80] Appendix—II, pp. 133-134.

[81] See the comparative table showing different traditions of the Chāmāna genealogy in *JRAS*, 1913, p. 265.

Two twelfth century accounts of the Chāhamāna genealogy, those in the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* and the Bijolia inscription, are complete and accurate. The names of kings and their succession are substantially the same. These two records however belong to two different traditions. The *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* is an epic composed by the court poet to please his royal master, whereas the Bijolia inscription was written by a Jaina monk Guṇabhadra to commemorate the erection of a Jaina temple by a devout Jaina named Lolārka.[83] The first is a work of the imperial and poetic tradition of the Chāhamāna history, while the second is a private record of the Jaina tradition.

In the Chāhamāna territory, the monastic traditions of the Jainas had come under the heavy influence of the court, at least from the times of Pṛithvīrāja I, who had a golden cupola put on a Jaina temple at Ranthambhor.[84] Ajayarāja presented a golden *kalaśa* to the temple of Pārśvanātha at Ajmer.[85] Arṇorāja patronized the Jaina scholar Dharmaghosha, and Vigraharāja IV constructed a Jaina monastery in the capital. Someśvara sanctioned the grant of a village to a Jaina temple.[86] Further, the Chāhamāna ministers presided over learned debates between Jaina scholars held in the royal court. In one of these debates, Pṛithvīrāja III gave his verdict in favour of Jinadatta Sūri against Padmaprabha and presented a *jayapatra* (certificate of victory) to the former.[87] Ajayarāja also acted as a judge in a religious debate between Dharmaghrsha and Guṇachandra.

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[82] *Hammīra-Mahākāvya*, I, 13. [83] *EI*, XXVI, 84.

[84] Dasharath Sharma *op. cit.*, p. 38.

[85] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

The *rapprochement* between the court and monastic traditions resulted in historical writing by the Jainas at three different levels. The upper section of the Jainas, steeped in the classical traditions of Sanskrit literature, followed the lead of the court poet and joined the imperial school of Chāhamāna history. The *Hammīra-Mahākāvya* by the Jaina Sūri Nạyachandra is a historical epic orchestrated with the usual conventions of the imperial school. Secondly, the wandering Jaina priests composed *prabandhas* or the historical anecdotes about the Chāhamāna rulers, which were narrated in congregations with a view to convince them of the magnificence and might of the Jaina religion.[88] The third section is more important and we shall discuss the compositions of this school a little later. It is here, as in the *vagantes* of mediaeval Europe, that a current of monastic tradition was fused with the plebian tradition of the bards.[89] The Jaina monks of this group, like bards, compiled the genealogies of the reigning kings and composed the *khyātas* or the chronicles of the state, reign after reign.

The Bijolia inscription is definitely based on Jaina tradition but as the latter is of mixed character, being constituted by three distinct currents, it is difficult to single out its source without critical examination of the *vaṁśa* in the Bijolia inscription.

In this epigraph the history of the Chāhamānas of the Śākambharī branch from their origin to Ajayarāja is given in just three verses.[90] The theme is developed in three parts—the preface, the origin of the Śākambharī branch and the *rājāvalī*. The structure of the composition is uneven and disjointed as its three parts are not smoothly interlinked but imposed one over the other without proper reconciliation. To elucidate the point, we give below the translation of the verse, which describes the origin of the Śākambharī branch of the Chāhamānas:

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[86] *Ibid.*, p. 227. [87] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[88] G. Buehler, *The Life of Hemachandra*, SJGM, pp. 2-3.

[89] L. P. Tessitori, Bardic and Historical Survey of Rajputanā, Appendix I, *JASB*, Ns, XV, 1919, pp. 5-79.

> "Wearing (?) the drapery of rippling (waves) of pure water over a beautiful, clear and highly shining body, bent with the burden of breasts heavy like high mountains, Śākambharā (*sic*) was born [even after him] from Vishṇu like the mother [of the Chāhamānas]."[91]

As a prelude to the origin of the Śākambharī branch of the Chāhamānas, the poet Guṇabhadra describes here the creation of the Śākambharī lake. But the phrase 'even after him' (*tatopi*), which should normally refer to some person mentioned previously, becomes unintelligible as nobody in the preceding verse could be denoted by it. Further, the word *janīva* (like the mother) hangs unconnected, and the phrase "of the Śākambharī branch of the Chāhamānas" had to be added for its proper understanding. Lastly, after describing the creation of the Śākambharī lake as the mother (of the Śākambharī branch of the Chāhamānas) by Vishṇu-Vāsudeva, the poet immediately proceeds to tell about Sāmanta, the Brāhmaṇa noble of Ahichchhatra, and leaves it to the imagination of readers to forge the link between Vāsudeva of the Chāhamāna family and Sāmanta the Brāhmaṇa of Vatsa *gotra*. Likewise no attempt is made to associate the Chāhamāna family with Vishṇu-Vāsudeva who created the salt-lake. The three parts of the composition are quite separate and unconnected. This may indicate that they represent three different layers of tradition from earlier writings on Chāhamāna history, and if so, they should be studied separately to understand their affiliations.

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[90] vv. 12-14.

[91] Lāvaṇya-nirmmala-mahoj (jj) valitānga-yashṭi
Rachchhochchhalachchhuchipayaḥ paridhāna-dhātrī
Uttuṅga-parvvata-payodhara-bhārabhugnā
Śākaṁbharājani janīva tato'pi Vishṇoḥ Verse 11.

The Preface

The prefatory verse runs as follows:

> "The royal family (*vaṁśa*) of the Chāhamānas is unique (*apūrva*)—although it possesses an ancestry (*pūrvā*)—, because it is free from idiocy and blemishes, and is meritorious, strong and unsubmissive and is neither aplit (*bhinna*) nor inferior (*aṅga*) whereas an ordinary bamboo tree (*vaṁśa*) is rooted in the earth and is split, subdivided, full of holes, fruitless and weak."[92]

With the help of the figure of speech *vyatireka*, based on double meanings of the word *vaṁśa*–a bamboo tree and a family–, the poet praises in general the royal family of the Chāhamānas. This stereotyped and conventional device was evolved by royal genealogists and poets in the early mediaeval period. It does not occur in early inscriptions, although it figures frequently in historical narratives and inscriptions of the early Mediaeval age. A Chāhamāna grant from Nadal introduces the genealogy by the verse: "Like a bamboo tree, which though uncovered by the foliage, resounds with the chirpings of birds that cluster around it, the *vaṁśa* of the Chāhamānas is surrounded by Brāhmaṇas and is prosperous."[93]

Almost identical is the language of the verses prefaced to the Chandella genealogy in the Khajuraho inscription of Dhangadeva[94] and the eulogy of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva in the Bhuvaneśvara inscription.[95]

Sometimes this idea is elaborated with the help of a poetic convention (*Kavisamaya*) that jewels come out of a bamboo tree when, at the time of the *svāti* constellation, a drop of rain-water falls on the latter. Thus, Padmagupta introduces the Paramāra genealogy in the *Navasāhasāṅkacharita* by stating, "As jewels which come out of a bamboo-tree make it swell, so the kings who succeeded (the eponymous hero) Paramāra brought distinction to the line founded by him."[96] Such verses are found in other historical narratives,[97] as also in the inscriptions of the Chedis,[98] the Chandellas,[99] the Chaulukyas[100] and others. Jayānaka in his highly suggestive style commences his account of the Chāhamāna genealogy with the verse: "A clump of bamboo trees does not lend so much charm to the forest as do the jewels which come out of it. So the world went on prospering even after the death of Chāhamāna."[101]

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[92] Śrī-Chāhamāna-kshiti-rāja-vaṁśaḥ
paurvo'pyapūrvvoni (na) jaḍāvanaddhaḥ
Bhinno na chāṅgo na cha raṅdhrayukto
no niḥ phalaḥ sārayuto nato no. Verse 10.

[93] Dasharath Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

[94] *EI*, II, 137, v. 11. [95] *IB*, III, 33, v. 4.

Thus, in historical narratives and inscriptions, the mediaeval genealogists of the imperial school generally followed this device and its occurrence in the Bijolia inscription indicates their influence on the poet Guṇabhadra.

The Creation of the Salt Lake

The preface is followed by the story of Vāsudeva who is credited with the creation of the salt lake. There are three versions of this story. The epics of the 14th and the 16th centuries represent the dynast as Vāsudeva Dīkshita who carved out a small principality in the region of Śākambharī.[102]

Then there is the bardic story that the dynasty of the Chāhamānas obtained a boon from the goddess Śākambharī that he would rule over the area which he could encompass on horse-back in one day, but as he failed to follow her instructions, the area was converted into a lake.[103]

Lastly in the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya*, we get the embellished story in which Vāsudeva is described as having been blessed by a Vidyādhara, instead of the goddess Śākambharī of the bardic tale. The earth, out of love towards Vāsudeva, perspired and consequently the salt lake was formed.[104] In this version, after stripping the bardic story of its folk-tale formula, Jayānaka presented it in a mythological setting and embellished it with the conventions of contemporary narrative literature.

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[96] Canto XI, 75.

[97] *VDC*, I, 60. [98] *CII*, IV, p. 259, v. 4; [99] *EI*, I, p. 140, v. 14.

[100] *Ibid.*, I. 296, v. 4. [101] II, 70.

[102] *Hammīra-Mahākāvya*, I, 27; *Surjanacharita*, I, 9-19.

[103] *Annals and Antiquities of Rājasthān*, III, p. 1449.

The story in the Bijolia record is evidently more developed than the first version found in the later epics. The bardic tale explains the association of Vāsudeva on the basis of the folk-tale formula, while the Bijolia record gives a mythological interpretation by identifying Vāsudeva with Vishṇu on the strength of the synonymity of the two words. Thus, the present record marks that stage where, although the imperial tradition had modified and adapted the bardic tale, it had not so far embellished the story with the tale of mystery.

The Genealogy

The third part consists of what is known as *rājāvalī*, or the string of royal names. Here kings from Sāmanta to Ajayadeva are treated in just two and a half verses. The history of the same period is detailed in one complete canto of the *Pṛithvirāja-vijaya.* This is, however, quite natural, as an epigraph set up to commemmorate the construction of a religious edifice would necessarily deal but briefly with the earlier history of the ruling dynasty. But what is unusual in the geneology as obtained from the inscription is its treatment. Up to Ajayarāja it is given in the form of a string of names arranged more or less as mnemonics:

> viprah̤ śrī Vatsa-gotre' bhūdahichchhatrapure purā Sāmanto-
> nantasāmantaḥ pūrṇattalle Nṛipastathā. 12.
> Tasmāchchhrī Jayarāja-Vigrahaṇṛipau Śrīchandra-Gopendrakau.
> Tasmāddurlabhagṇvakau Śaśiṇrapo Gūvaka-Sachchandanau
> Śrīmadvappayarāja Viṁdhyaṇripatī Śrīsiṁharāḍvigrahau
> Śrīmaddurlabha Guṁdu-Vākpatinṛipāḥ Śrī Vīryarāmonujaḥ. 13.
> [Chāmuṇdo] 'vanipo'pi cha rāṇakavaraḥ Śrī Siṁghato Dūsala-
> Stadbhrātātha tatopi Vīsala-nṛipaḥ Śrī-Rājadevī-priyaḥ.
> Pṛithvīrāja-nṛipo'tha tattanubhu(bha) vo Rāsalladevī-vibhu –
> statputro' jāyadeva ityavanipaḥ Samalladevī-patiḥ. 14.

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[104] Canto IV. For "the lance-water motif" see *infra* p. 204, fn. 1.

In character, these pithy verses closely resemble the abridged versions of the Jaina *Gurvāvalīs*, which contain just the names of Jaina teachers whose history is discussed in some detail in larger versions known as *Bṛihadgurvāvalī*s.[105] Further, they resemble the verses in the *Dīpavaṁśa*, termed *memory verses* by Geiger[106] They contain merely strings of names which indicate the main points in stories. Their elucidations are found in the *Mahāvaṁśa*, the *Thūpavaṁśa* and elsewhere.

The *rājāvalis* also had two versions—one short and the other elaborate. In connection with the *vaṁśāvalīs* of Nepal, Petech notes, "A *vaṁśāvalī* is primarily what its name indicates: a string of generations, i. e., a genealogical list, which in its simplest form gives merely the names of rulers with the duration of their reigns in years and months. This elementary scheme is then variated (*sic*) by the addition of dates and of short titles relating the chief events. These additions may become more and more elaborate till the whole assumes the shape of a chronicle, or even of annals; this development occurs quite early."[107] Tessitori who studied the prose chronicles of Rājasthan came to the same conclusion. According to him the prose chronicles are of two categories—the *pīḍhiyāvalīs* or the genealogies and the *khyāta* or chronicles proper. The *pīḍhiyāvali* which means a "string of generations" is generally in the form of a list of bare names without dates, whereas the *khyāta* or chronicle proper give in chronological order, reign after reign, the history of a Rājput state, always keeping the rulers in prominent view.[108] In this respect, the *rājāvalī* of the Bijolia inscription is identical with the *pīḍhiyāvalī* of the prose chronicles of Rājasthan and with the Nepal *vaṁśāvalī* in its simplest form.

While examining the question of the authorship of the *pīḍhiyāvalīs* in Rājasthan, Tessitori remarked, "Anyhow, it is certain that as far as the *rāṭhōras* are concerned they had also one or more Jaina Jatis (*sic*) who kept regular records of the family, and the

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[105] *Kharatara-Jachchha-Bṛihad-gurvāvalī*, Ed. by Muni Jinavijaya, SJGM, 42, 1956, Bombay, introduction 1-3.

[106] Wilhelm Geiger, *The Dīpavaṁśa and Mahāvaṁsa and Their Historical Development in Ceylon*, tr. by E. M. Coomaraswamy, Colombo, 1908, p. 8.

[107] Luciano Petech, *Mediaeval History of Nepal*, Roma, 1958, p. 5.

[108] *JASB*, N.S. XV, 1919, pp. 19-20.

Jatis (*sic*) are possibly entitled to some credit."[109] The Jaina monks kept the genealogical records not only of the *rāṭhōras* but also of their forerunners in Rājasthan, the Chāhamānas, as is evidenced by the *Chāhamāna-vaṁśa* appended to the several manuscripts of the *Prabandha-kośa* of Rājaśekhara.[110]

The crude and mnemonic form of these two and a half verses, prosaic though versified, of the Bijolia record may further be associated (as Geiger has done in the case of *memory verses* in Pālī)[111] with the oral tradition of the *vaṁśa* lore. In order to hold the theme in readiness, the reciter used to memorize the main points of the recitation arranged in the form of *memory verses* which, when occasion demanded, could be developed with the help of an elaborate version. The bare pedigree was, of course, preserved by memory. Even to this day, Rajput and Jats know their pedigrees by heart.[112] However, we do not suggest that this part of the inscription is directly based on an oral tradition, but that the poet Guṇabhadra probably made use of a written record, which on its part bore the stamp of an oral tradition. In fact all bardic records show this characteristic. According to Forbes, the bards of western India recorded in their *vahīa* (registers) accounts which are not intelligible without oral explanations, and it was indeed the bard's practice to interpose the recitation of family histories recorded in their *vahīs* with extempore explanations and amplifications.[113]

Thus, the *rājāvalī* of the Bijolia inscription seems to have been based on the third current of Jaina tradition in which, like bards, the Jaina monks compiled the *vaṁśa* or use the term current in Rājasthan *pīdhiyavalīs*, of the reigning kings and composed the *khyātas*.

In short, the preface and 'the story of Vāsudeva' bear the impress of the imperial school of Chāhamāna history, whereas the *rājāvali* represents its pure and simple tradition.

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[109] *loc. cit.*, pp. 23-24.

[110] Geiger, *op. cit.*, pp. 10 ff.

[111] Tessitori, *op. cit.*, p. 21 and n.

[112] Tessitori, *op. cit.*, p. 21 and n.

[113] A. K. Forbes, *Rās Mālā*, ed, by H. G. Rawlinson, London, 1924, Vol, II, p. 265.

The Vaṁśa in the Pṛithvīrāja-Vijaya

After the *rājāvali* in the form of a string of royal names up to Ajayarāja, the account in the Bijolia inscription tends to become elaborate. In essentials, it resembles the Nepalese chronicles as deecribed by Petech or rather the *khyātas* Rājasthan, though in much shorter form. The absence of hyperbolic expressions, exaggerated accounts of royal conquests and chivalric, dramatic and poetic embellishments, distinguishes it from the royal *praśastis* of contemporary kingdoms. Indeed, this chronicle of later Chāhamāna kings in the Bijolia inscription represents the simple tradition of Chāhamāna history carried on by Jaina monks in the royal service, as does its earlier part the *rājāvali.*

The inscription recounts several important political engagements of the Chāhamāna rulers. The subjugation of Chāchiga, Sindhula and Yaśorāja by Ajayarāja;[114] the conquest of Vāraṇa (Bulandsahar, U. P.) and Mālavā by Arṇorāja;[115] and the defeat of the rulers of the Bhādānakas, Jāvālipura, Pallikā, Nadal and Delhi by Vigraharāja IV[116] are briefly enumerated. The account of the same period in the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* is ten times as long, but still few of these facts, so important for political history, are given by Jayānaka. Besides an eloquent and embellished description of prosperity under the Chāhamānas, the poet treats at great length of the foundation of Ajmer by Ajayarāja,[117] the issue of a new series of coins by him.[118] the fortification of Pushkara by Arṇorāja[119] and the crushing defeat he inflicted over the Muslim forces.[120] Obviously, the narrative of Guṇabhadra is centred round political history. On the other hand, Jayānaka was more interested in events relevant to the story of Rāma-Pṛithvīrāja and in things of courtly interest.

This tendency is reflected also in the earlier part of the *vaṁśa* in the epic. The struggle of Pṛithvīrāja III with the Muslims and his rivalry with the Solankīs of Gujarat had heightened the interest of the contemporary courtiers and nobility in the earlier Chāhamāna engagements with these powers. Excepting therefore those events which had a bearing upon these conflicts,

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[114] Verse 15. [115] Verse 17. [116] Verse 19. [117] *PV*, canto V, 192.
[118] *Ibid.*, V, 88-90. [119] *Ibid.*, V, 193. [120] *VI*, 1-20.

Jayānaka rarely evinced any interest in political incidents. Horses, swords and popular rumours such as that the queen Rudrāṇī had mystic powers[121] and that Pṛithvīrāja I was seen to have assumed a fourhanded form, indicating that he was an incarnation of a divine elephant,[122] mainly occupied his attention. He quotes a verse, presumably written on the sword of Vigraharāja I,[123] and praises the sword used by Durlabharāja I but does not care to give the context of the notable success achieved by the latter in Bengal, probably under the banner of his Pratihāra overlord.

In fine, the popular Jaina tradition emphasized the political aspect and was transmitted in simple and direct language. The *vaṁśa* composition in the epic was, however, dominated by courtly interest and the glorification of the royal hero. Further, history is here viewed as a number of different and disjointed events arranged within the framework of genealogy. No pattern or story is forced on it. On the other hand, the account of the life of Pṛithvīrāja is unfolded in the form of a story in certain well-defined stages and adroitly designed on the basis of an archetype.

The Story of Pṛithvīrāja

The anachronistic representation of contemporary kings as ancient heroes, especially as Rāma-Dāśarathī,—an important trend in the mediaeval historiography—culminates in the story of Pṛithvīrāja. The poet starts the work with the professed intention of writing a biography of Pṛithvīrāja III, who "assumed the body of Rāma in order to furnish a novel yet noble theme for poets to expatiate on and to establish a standard of heroism for kings to emulate."[124] This idea runs throughout the length and breadth of the poem which reveals a constant, consistent and elaborate attempt to represent the Chāhamāna king and his associates as Rāma and his companions.

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[121] *Ibid.*, V, 37-39. [122] *Ibid*, V, 80.

[123] That the verse 10 of the fifth canto is a quotation, is explicitly stated by Jayānaka in the following verse–*iti stūtaṁ kavi-varaiḥ*. The verse belongs to the *chitra* class and was composed for being inscribed on the sword. Jonarāja in his commentary states '*khaḍgādi-saṁniveśa-hetuḥ*.

[124] *PV*, I, 33.

The foundation of this anachronistic form of the story is laid in the epic, when Vishṇu, at the request of Brahmā, introduces the hero, Chāhamāna, as a director of the play (*sūtradhāra*) to prepare the stage for his incarnation as Pṛithvīrāja III, for the purpose of destroying the *mlechchhas*.[125] It further develops when the astrologer is described as having predicted that Rāma would incarnate himself as a son of Someśvara to complete his mission which he could only partially accomplish in the Tretā age.[126] An inset story is emboxed at this juncture to underline the idea of incarnation. When Jayasiṁha Siddharāja, the Solanki ruler, expressed his doubts about the future incarnation of Rāma as his great-grandson through his daughter Kāñchanadevī, the astrologer said that in the previous birth, Jayasiṁha himself was a lion who guarded the hilly residence of Śiva-Parvati, and who was cursed by Pārvati to lead the life of a king on the earth till he was convinced that Rāma would be born again.[127] The astrologers story brought conviction to the hesitating king and he proceeded to the Sphaṭikāchala Mountain to perform austerities.[128]

Further, the horoscope of the moment when Pṛithvīrāja was conceived by his mother Karpūradevī was cast, and is described after the horoscope of Rāma as given in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Kauśalyā is described as having given birth to Rāma when the Sun, the Moon, Saturn, Jupiter, and Venus were respectively in the signs of Aries, Taurus, Libra, Cancer and Pisces.[129] Except for the position of Saturn, which is placed in its own house of Aquarius and not in Libra, the house of its exaltation, all other planets are similarly located in the horoscope of Pṛithvīrāja's conception.[130] There is however an inconsistency in the latter. It records that Pṛithvīrāja was born on the 12th day of the month of Jyeshṭha.[131] Naturally, he must have been conceived sometime in the month of Śrāvaṇa or Bhādrapada. But the sun never occupies the sign of

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[125] I, 75. [126] VI, 35. [127] VII, 1-8.

[128] VII, 9-10.

[129] For a discussion on the horoscope of Rāma, see S. K. Pillai, *Indian Ephemeries*, I, 112-13.

[130] VII. 23-28. [131] VII, 50.

Aries during these months.[132] The inconsistency in the horoscope of Pṛithvīrāja and the similarity of planetary dispositions in the horoscopes of Rāma and Pṛithvīrāja expose the fictional character of the latter.

The poet constantly keeps the dual rôle of Pṛithvīrāja in view and makes frequent statements about his divine incarnation. Thus the name of Rāma, when uttered incidentally by nurses, revived the sweet memories of his previous birth in the mind of the child Pṛithvīrāja when for the sake of warding off evils, a necklace containing the effigies of ten incarnations was placed round the neck of Pṛithvīrāja in his early age, he became conscious of his duties and obligations as an incarnation of Rāma. The ocean was afraid of Pṛithvīrāja because in his previous birth as Rāma, he had pierced the ocean with three fiery shafts and therefore the latter, in the reign-period of Pṛithvīrāja, gave just sufficient water to the clouds to rain lest a heavy downpour may destroy the crops.

In order to cast the complete biography of Pṛithvīrāja in the mould of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and to lend his hero the glory of Rāma in his multifarious aspects, the poet portrayed the royal ministers—Kadambavāsa and Bhuvanaikamalla respectively as Hanumān and Garuḍa, the mythical bird used by Vishṇu as a conveyance.

Kadambavāsa, the poet informs us, was popularly known as Hanumān.[133] Like a monkey, he had a tawny complexion, and, like Hanumān, his body of fame went across the oceans. He still had the bright effulgence which he had acquired from the rays emitted from the crowns of Arjuna, when, in his previous birth as Hanumān, he adorned the banner of the Pāṇḍava prince by his presence.[134] He also retained within him the fire with which he had burnt the city of Rāvaṇa. The shining radiance of Kadambavāsa, which, as Hanumān, he had obtained from the Sun and the Moon, who hurled their bright-shafts at him when he leapt up to seize them, increased the more, the longer he served Pṛithvīrāja, the best in the house of the Solar and Lunar Kshartrias.[135]

Employing the *double entendre*, the favourite device of the poets of the mediaeval period, Jayānaka represented the Chāhamāna minister Bhuvanaikamalla as Garuḍa. "Through his power of destroying the Nāgas (i.e. the Nāga tribe or alternatively the serpents)" the poets says, "Bhuvanaikamalla has manifestly identified himself with Garuḍa". He further adds, "It seems that Garuḍa has adopted the human form by discarding his golden wings (alternatively the greed for gold)".[136] The author then proceeds to describe the glorious and benevolent rule of Pṛithvīrāja-Rāma with the help of Kadambavāsa, Hanumān and Bhuvanaikamalla Garuḍa.

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[132] See also *Infra* pp. 239 and fn.

[133] IX, 38. [134] IX, 39-40. [135] IX, 43.

Next, the poet took the crucial step of identifying the spouse of Pṛithvīrāja with Sītā. But as the story enters this stage, which is vitally important for understanding the significance of the whole, the Ms. suddenly breaks off. Still a study of the structure of the story and the pattern of its development may reveal some of the poetic devices employed by the author to associate the consort of Pṛithvīrāja with the queen of Rāma.

In conformity with the literary conventions of Sanskrit epics, the complete *Pṛthvīrāja-vijaya* must have had at least eighteen cantos, but the only Ms. of the work known to be in existence, contains merely eleven chapters in entirety with a part of the twelfth. Thus, at least one third of the story in lost.

In the eleventh canto, the poet introduces a new character, Tilottamā—the celestial nymph. When the news of a war between the Gurjjaras and the *mlechchhas* reached the Chāhamāna court, Kadambavāsa advised the king not to interfere in this mutually destructive war between his two rivals. In support of his policy, he related the story of Tilottamā who lured the two demons brothers Sunda and Upasunda and thus brought about their destruction by playing one against the other. Meanwhile an emissary came from the court of the Solankīs and informed Pṛithvīrāja of the Gurjjara victory over the *mlechchhas*. This gave a further opportunity for developing the theme. Taking the cue from Kadambavāsa, the royal bard Pṛithvībhaṭa pointed out that the goddess of Royal Fortune, like Tilottamā, had purposely drawn both the rivals of Pṛithvīrāja—the Gurjjara potentate and the Muslim governor into a deadly combat. Elucidating his point, the bard mentioned that Tilottamā alone could be compared with Ramā and that she had once played the role of Sītā, the incarnation of Lakshmī.[137] This naturally led to an interlude in which the story of Rāma was pictorially represented and poetically narrated by the bard. After Pṛithvīrāja as Rāma had killed Rāvaṇa, it is said, the drama of Rāma's life was enacted in the divine assembly. Tilottamā, filling the role of Sītā, excited love in the heart of Rāma, and in turn herself fell in love with him. Since then, it is stated, she was nourishing in her bosom an intense love for the Ikshvāku king. In the royal picture-gallery, Pṛithvīrāja too saw the portrait of Tilottamā in the rôle of Sītā, and the feelings of old love immediately revived and overpowered him.

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[136] IX, 88.

The next canto begins with the description of the debilitating effects of love-fever on Pṛithvīrāja. This made Kadambavāsa and Pṛithvībhaṭa repent of the mistake of narrating before the king the episode of Tilottamā.

But fortunately a stranger recited a verse which purports to say that nothing in this world is impossible to achieve for those who dare and act, since the earth could be recovered from the depths of the ocean, Sītā was obtained from the bowels of the earth and Draupadī was procured from within the flames of fire.[138] The verse mysteriously brought relief to the love-lorn king. On making enquiries, the stranger who recited the verse, turned out to be Jayānaka, a poet, scholar and ascetic from Kashmir.

He then disclosed that Tilottamā had already taken birth somewhere on the banks of the Gangā and that she was pining for love of Pṛithvīrāja, although her hand has been promised to another suitor. The poet thus deftly weaves the story of Tilottamā in the biography of Pṛithvīrāja.

The almost forced introduction of the story of Tilottamā, the elaborate and far-fetched attempt to compare, associate and identify her with the goddess of Royal Fortune and Sītā, the description of the ardent love between her and Pṛithvīrāja and lastly her identification with a lady born on the banks of the Gangā leave no doubt that the union of Pṛithvīrāja with the lady of the Gangetic plains was the ultimate end of this poem.

[137] XI, 19-24. [138] XII, 56.

Further, the frequently repeated statement that Pṛithvīrāja was born as an incarnation of Rāma to fulfil his mission of annihilating the *mlechchhas*, the description of Rāma's victory over Rāvaṇa in the eleventh canto, probably as a background for the forthcoming events, and the introduction of the incident of the Gurjjara-Muslim struggle in which Muizz al-Dīn Muhammad Ghorī is represented to have the design of capturing the goddess of Royal Fortune, clearly indicate that the poet had described the victory of Pṛithvīrāja over the Ghorid.

The story is based upon the same old formula of the *Bṛihatkathā*–the attainment of universal suzerainty by the hero through his union with the heroine, who symbolizes the Regna Fortuna, after the defeat or destruction of a formidable enemy. It incidentally coincides with the happenings in the life of Rāma, who killed the wicked demon Rāvaṇa, obtained reunion with Sītā and became a *Chakravartin* king.

The theme is evidently developed in the five conventional stages. "The beginning" consists in introducing the hero Chāhamāna as a stage manager. The stage of "the effort" is reached when the astrologer predicts the incarnation of Rāma as a son of Someśvara and Pṛithvīrāja was conceived at a moment which indicated his greatness equal to that of Rāma. The extinction of the collateral line and the accession of Someśvara and later on of Pṛithvīrāja to the throne of Śākambharī, mark the stage of "the possibility of success". And when the story is entering the fourth stage of "the certainty of success" the Ms. suddenly breaks off.

Now, the two important events, which must have been recounted in the last part of the epic, are the victory of Pṛithvīrāja over the Muslim invader Muizz al-Dīn Muhammad Ghorī and the union of the former with the lady of the Gangetic plains. Since both the *Bṛihatkathā* formula and the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the archetype of the present epic, place the union of the hero with the heroine later than the defeat of the formidable rival playing the part of a villain, the victory of Pṛithvīrāja over the Ghorid must have comprised the fourth stage of "the certainty of success" and the union of Pṛithvīrāja with his unknown consort as "the attainment of success".

Thus restored, the poem reveals the heroine as an extraordinary amalgam of Sītā, the goddess of Royal Fortune, Tilottamā, and the lady of the Gangetic region. As the goddess of Royal Fortune and Tilottamā are merely links, the heroine in reality has only two capacities—the symbolic as Sīta, and the historical as the unknown spouse of Pṛithvīrāja.

Though not exactly of Rāvaṇa, in the preserved portion of the epic, Muizz al-Dīn Muhammad Ghorī is assigned the character of a demon-king, since his soldiers and associates are described as demons in human form.

Thus, besides the usual roles, Pṛithvīrāja, Kadambavāsa, Bhuvanaikamalla, Jayānaka, the lady of the Gangetic plains, and Muizz al-Dīn Muhammad Ghorī play the parts of Rāma, Hanumān, Garuḍa, Vālmīki, Sīta-Tilottamā and the demon-chief Rāvaṇa.

CHAPTER VI

HISTORY IN HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

THE STUDY of history from historical works of ancient times simultaneously involves two processess—the understanding of the historian's idea of history in the ontological perspective of the ancient world in which he lived and from which his ideas derived their contents, and its translation according to the current concepts and terminology. The modern concept of history is essentially European,—rooted in the Greco-Christian tradition and developed in the hot house of the 18th century European Enlightenment.[1] Therefore in the case of an historical work composed in ancient Europe, the process is complicated but not difficult. It can be done by studying the different stages in the development of historical ideas, understanding ancient writings in their correct contexts and then interpreting them in modern terms.

But a similar study of historical works composed in ancient India presents a baffling problem. *Itihāsa*, originated and grew in the context of ancient Indian civilization, which was very much different from the European, and in the process it developed a character of its own. The modern concept of history, imported to India in the recent past when archaeological discoveries and positivist philosophy were influencing its nature,[2] has no alignment with *itihāsa*. It marks a complete break with past traditions. It is not therefore possible to move backwards, tracing the successive stages in the evolution of historical ideas, and understanding the ancient historical texts in the perspective of the ancient world-view, and in the context of *itihāsa*. To augment the difficulty the modern historian is disinclined to accept the forms of ancient Indian *itihāsa* as historical. Conditioned by the language and ideas of modern historiography, historians viewed them rather as the monsters of the fable, who callously tortured and disfigured the fairy princesses of history, and from whose clutches the historians as gallant knights were duty-bound to liberate them; at the best these texts were thought to be full of irrational accretions which should be removed before the pure gold of history could be seen.

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[1] Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, parts I-III.

[2] The early period, marked in general with the trend of literary antiquarianism, and started by Sir William Jones, was more favourable to the historical narratives. In the Tenth Anniversary Discourse on Asiatic History, Civil and Military (*As. Res.* IV, 1797, 1-17), Sir William discussed the importance of the *Purāṇas* in reconstructing the history of ancient India. He was followed by Captain Francis Wilford (*As. Res.* V, 1797. pp. 241-296) and H.H. Wilson (*Select specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus* 1827, subsequently published in 1835. Vol. II 127-136) who tried to reconstruct the Mauryan history from a later work, the *Mudrā-Rākshasa*. But unfortunately, during this period only one historical narrative, the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, was known from abridged translations and summaries in Persian. The first work of this type discovered by modern scholars was the *Harshacharita*. In 1859, Fitz Edward Hall an-

In fact, the modern historian of ancient India unceremoniously discarded the ancient forms and ideas of *itihāsa*. Sometimes he unwittingly threw away the baby with the bath-water by completely rejecting the testimony of ancient historical works, but generally, suppressing the subjective element enshrined in forms and ideas, he studied these works as a numistatist examines an ancient coin or as an archaeologist subjects to his investigation a potsherd discovered in surface exploration, and not excavated from the trench in the sequence of layers. Thereby, he discarded a useful line of investigation and imposed unnecessary restrictions on his activity. Divesting his sources from their contexts and thus blocking the way of investigation into the development and meaning of their setting, he was constrained to judge them only by the criteria accepted in philology or general exegesis. Naturally therefore he was led to form such a theory as that the Chāhamānas

nounced the discovery of the three Mss. of the *HC* in his edition of the *Vāsavadattā* (Calcutta, Preface, p. 12). Two years later, Bhau Daji discovered another Ms. *JBBRAS*, X, 38-45). The *HC* was first published with arbitrary amendations and corrupt readings by Jibanand in 1876 (Calcutta) and thereafter in 1878 (Kashmir) and 1892 (Bombay) E.B. Cowell published its translation in 1897. The historicity of the events described in the *HC* was discussed by Hall *op. cit*, pp. 16-17) in 1859 and by Max Mueller (*IA*, XII, p. 253) in 1883. The treatment, however, changed with the discovery of copper plates of Harsha, edited by G. Buehler in *EI*, I, 1892, pp. 67ff; IV, 1896-97 p. 208ff.

were solar kshatriyas who adopted the Vatsa *gotra* of their priest,[3] and thus reconciled two contrary statements, found in the works belonging to two different traditions. By overlooking the historical process involved in the growth of traditions, here the historian not only came to a wrong conclusion but also missed the significance of the mythology evolved by the imperialist historians of the mediaeval age. Likewise arguments, based on statistical grounds, enumerating the authorities in favour of a theory, were advanced without taking into consideration that all these authorities belong to one single school and therefore mere abundance of testimony will not bring credibility. The majority of ancient authors writing on the Chāhamānas mention the solar origin of the dynasty, but they all belong to the imperial school of the Chāhamāna history. Evidence from the Ajmer *Praśasti*,[4] the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya*,[5] the *Hammīra-Mahākāvya*[6] and the Bedla inscription[7] does not necessarily weigh heavier than that from the Bijolia inscription. Again, without reference to the history of the traditions, the general rule of interpretation that the earlier the source the more authentic it is, does not yield valid conclusions. For instance, the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* gives an embellished account of Vāsudeva, the dynast of the Chāhamānas. With the destruction of the Ajmer house of the Chāhamānas, this part of the imperial tradition vanished, giving place to a popular tradition in later epics, the *Hammīra-Mahākāvya* and the *Surjana-charita*. Thus what is written about Vāsudeva in the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya* cannot be considered more authentic than what is obtained from later sources.

Lastly, the modern historian is apt to forget that these historical epics are deliberately artistic and organically designed and, therefore, in order to reconstruct history, data from them cannot indiscriminately be torn out of their context. For example, the horoscope of Pṛithvīrāja IV, as given in the *Pṛithvīrāja-vijaya*,[8] is modelled after that of Rāma, and is just a part of the story deliberately constructed by the poet to show that Prithvīrāja III was the incarnation of Rāma. The astronomical data given in this context cannot therefore be used to determine the date of his birth.[9]

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[3] C.V. Vaidya, *History of Mediaeval India*, II, pp. 50ff; G.H. Ojha, *History of Rajputana*, I, pp. 347ff.

[4] *EI*, XXIX, 180, vv. 34-37. [5] Cantos I and II. [6] I, 14 ff.

[7] Dasharatha Sharma, *Early Chauhān Dynasties*, Delhi, 1959, p. 94, verse 2.

[8] VII, 23-28. see *supra* pp. 223-234.

Even working within this limited scope, the cautious historian may sometimes come to a correct conclusion, but always by having recourse to the techniques of disciplines other than the historical. Thus, against the theory of the solar origin of the Chāhamānas, which endeavoured to make a facile reconciliation of two contrary statements, it was pointed out that Sāmanta was a Brāhmaṇa and therefore, unlike a kshatriya, he was under no necessity to adopt the *gotra* of his priest.[10] But here both sides base their arguments on the exegetical principles of *mīmāṁsā*.

Besides these shortcomings in methodology, the modern historian suffers serious handicaps in the realms of higher criticism as well. In interpretation of the data from historical works, he tries to determine the prejudices and predilections of authors—court-poets, religious teachers and foreign travellers—, which mechanically splashed in colour at several places in their compositions. But obsessed by his initial inhibition, he rarely admits that ancient Indians could write history with any idea or purpose or in a distinctive form. Thus these mediaeval writings have not been adequately studied with reference to the moulds in which the material has been cast in order to give it a shape which was intelligible, interesting and useful to the contemporaries of the author. So the modern student has either rejected all that was expressed in the alien form or indiscriminately extracted material from it.

Thus, the complete story from the death of Prabhākara to the meeting of Harsha with Rājyaśrī is torn out of its context, and utilized, without proper processing, for reconstructing a very complicated episode of Harsha's history. To begin with, the meeting of Rājyaśrī with Harsha is not merely a happy union of the fugitive dowager queen with her royal brother. In view of the long-standing convention of *itihāsa* works, which represent the goddess of royalty as a princess, and her meeting with the king as symbolic of his attainment of the imperial position, the statement of Bāṇa that "Rājyaśrī brought a silvery stamp of sovereignty", the intricate weaving of the whole episode with the gift of the *ratnāvalī* to Harsha, and lastly the stage of *phalāgama* in the narrative, there is little doubt that this meeting of Harsha with Rājyaśrī is also symbolic. Not only Bāṇa, but the earlier writer Guṇādhya and the later biographers, Padmagupta, Bilhaṇa and others followed this convention in their works. In the case of Vikramāditya VI, it can be definitely shown that he married Chandralekhā when he was merely a governor but the exigency of the convention led Bilhaṇa to describe the wedding much later in the life of Vikramāditya VI and to state that the union of the hero with the heroine Chandralekhā symbolized the heroine's achievement of the imperial status.[11] It is therefore strange that the historians, who rejected lock, stock and barrel Bilhaṇa's account of the *svayaṁvara* of Chandralekhā, have swallowed hook, line and sinker the episode of Rājyaśrī and Harsha.

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[9] But *contra*, Dasharath Sharma, *op. cit*, p. 72 and fn. According to Jyotishāchārya Padmabhūshaṇa Surya Narayan Vyas (*loc. cit*. fn. 2) the planetary positions as mentioned by Jayānaka indicate the Vikrama year 1222. With due regard to the Astrologer Royal, we would like to submit that on the first day of the solar year 1165 = 1222 V. S., the geocentric latitude of Saturn was 267·8° and therefore Saturn could not have been in Aquarius during the Vikrama year 1222. See also *Rājasthānī*, II, pp. 1-3, for a similar attempt to determine the date of Harsha's birth, see *JBBRAS*, XXIV, 253-54.

[10] Dasharath Sharma, *op. cit*., p. 10 fn. 30.

Then, by neglecting the study of the idealizing process which transmutes facts into an intelligible pattern, the historians have missed the significance of the story of the discrepencies—the death-bed speech of Prabhākara, the announcement of Rājya in *darbar*, and the musings of Harsha—, which in fact is more important than even the central theme for reconstructing history. This resulted in the blurring of the perspective of the later history. The mysterious conditions under which Rājya was murdered, the testimony of Hsuān Tsāng and the epigraphic evidence do not neatly harmonize with the earlier picture drawn by historians on the basis of the *Harshacharita*.

For a while, let us compare the *Harshacharita* of Bāṇa and the *Vikramāṅkadevacharita* of Bilhaṇa. There is a striking similarity between these two works. Like Vikramāditya VI, Harsha, the second son of Prabhākara, was represented as pre-ordained by destiny to succeed his father on the throne and to surpass in glory the famous emperors of olden times. The dynast Pushyabhūti was blessed by Lakshmī, the Goddess of Fortune, that he would initiate a line in which an emperor of great fame, Harsha, would be born. Similarly Someśvara I Āhavamalla received blessing from the lord Śiva that the latter would incarnate himself as his second son, who would excel all the emperors of the past in virtues and valour. It is stated that even before the birth of Harsha and Vikrama, their royal fathers, respectively Prabhākara and Someśvara II, knew about the future greatness of their second sons and therefore, in preference to the first, they showered all their affection on them. The prediction of astrologers and the auspicious events at the time of their birth, prognosticating their glorious future, were described in the narrative to emphasize that they were destined to be great rulers.

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[11] *supra* pp. 228-231.

The similarity in the two accounts continues still further. Bilhaṇa introduces the story of Vikrama's refusal of the status of heir-apparent. In the *Harshacharita*, Bāṇa does not expressly record any offer of the throne by the royal father to his second son, but the two speeches of Prabhākara addressed to Harsha, on whom his "sovereignty and succession" depended, create an impression that he wanted Harsha to ascend the throne of Sthāṇvīśvara after him. The offer in clear terms, however, came later—from the rightful claimant of the throne—Rājya, the elder brother. But Harsha had resolved to decline the preposterous offer when the course of events took a sudden turn.

Lastly, both Harsha and Vikramāditya VI, although at first they declined the offer of the throne, later reluctantly became the rulers respectively of Thanesar and Kalyāna.

In spite of this similarity in themes and their treatment, the two works were handled differently by modern historians. Since there was an abundance of epigraphic data on Chālukyan history, the testimony of Bilhaṇa was ignored, and in the absence of inscriptional material on the history of the Vardhanas the evidence of the *Harshacharita* was utilized largely as Bāṇa deposed it. As the old fashioned historians did not have any further effective criterion to check and verify Bāṇa's account, they could do nothing but select material from the *Harshacharita* and try to draw a consistent picture from it. But once we accept that the mediaeval historians had some specific idea of history, and that they composed their works with certain motives, a study of their compositions with reference to their ideas, an investigation into the process of transmutation of facts, becomes possible. This new attitude supplies us with a means to raise the veil of mystery a little. The *Vikramāṅkadevacharita* becomes a defence plea and takes us to the public forum of ancient Karṇāṭaka where the followers of Vikrama and the partisans of Someśvara II made allegations and counter-allegations against each other. At the same time, this approach furnishes an additional standard to judge the authenticity of accounts which, added to the internal examination of texts, and general principles of coherence, consistency and possibility, may help the historians where they have no other clue to clutch at. Thus studied in the light of the ideas and the treatment of history, as revealed through a critical and comparative study of the *Harshacharita* and the *Vikramāṅkadevacharita*, the story of the discrepancies in the former work may reveal something which has as yet eluded the grasp of the historian.

Events develop in close juxtaposition and with constant interactions of ideas. The proper significance of events can be read through the associated scheme of ideas. The historical process running through constant changes in events and ideas, reveals itself clearly to a man who travels backwards through the ages and notices the ever-changing panorama from different angles, adjusted in accordance with the various stages in his journey. Here the modern man travelling through time is benefited by the ideas of history held by ancient authors, as they are verily the angles through which those events were viewed in contemporary times. To him, they serve as valuable guides in his exploration of the strange land of the past.

As the modern historian of ancient India unfortunately takes no note of such ancient ideas and forms, and so he is compelled to see the past panorama from his modern angle and *ex cathedra* organize the past events in his own scheme without their proper processing. It is agreed that ancient ideas and forms sound exotic to him and that they are unhistorical by all standards of modern historical science. But, this is precisely the reason why he sould take special care to understand them, lest he should fail in his calling as an interpreter of the past to the present. His total rejection of ancient forms and ideas is not only a glaring confession of his inability as a historian but it is also the throwing away of the most useful evidence. For example, the modern historian had completely rejected the story of Vāsudeva. On the other hand, a study in the historical mentality of these mediaeval authors affords an interesting clue to the fact that the story gives a rational interpretation of racial and regional appelations of the Chāhamāna family. It is designed to explain the clan-designation Śākambharī. This word occurs as the name of a goddess as early as *circa* 5th century A.D. in the *Devī Māhātmya* of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*.[12] Much earlier in the *Atharvaveda*,[13] the word Śakambhara figures in the sense of a region or people inhabiting the area near Bacteria. Sometime in the course of their history, the Chāhamānas came to be associated with it and the connection lingered on in the form of the clan-name, the tutelary goddess Śākambharī and even the patron god of the Chāhamānas named Śakambhara in the *Pṛithvīrāja Rāso*.[14]

Similar explanations of family names are found in the *Purāṇas* and were quite common in the historical writings of the period. The name Kadamba, for instance, is explained in a series of legends, contained in inscriptions. Sometimes the Kadambas are said to have derived their descent from the four-armed and three-eyed Kadamba, who sprang into existence from a drop of sweat that fell from the forehead of Śiva[15] whereas on other occasions, the founder of the line *Mayūravarmman*, is described as having been born under a *Kadamba* tree.[16]

This trend of the rational and mythological explanation as opposed to the historical, stems from two sources—the metaphysical and mythological schools of the etymologists, and the simple and naive stories of the folk tradition. The historical etymologists (noted in the *Nirukta* as *aitihāsikas*) explained names and events mentioned in the Vedas on the basis of historical tradition of the *itihasa-purāṇa*, philosophers (*ādhyātmika*) preferred their metaphysical interpretations based indirectly on the derivation of words, and the mythologists (*ādhidaivikas*) found in them allusions to gods and their activities.[17] Mythological and metaphysical interpretations were accepted later in the *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition especially in those cases for which there was no historical tradition to fall back upon. A similar process of simplification of ancient historical names and events is observed in folk-traditions. This device came in handy to poet-historians who deftly utilized it for explaining the significance of things and names, long forgotten, and to edify their royal patrons.

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[12] Canto *XCII*, v. 44. The name of the goddess also occurs in the *Araṇyakaparvan* (B.O.R.I.), ch. 82, V. 11.

[13] V, 22·4. but see contra Whiteney, *Atharvaveda* (HOS, VI), p. 259 Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharvaveda* (SBE. XLII) p. 445.

[14] Nāgarī Prachāriṇī sabhā Edition, Samaya LVII, p. 1493, vv. 211-13.

[15] *EC*, VII, Sk. 117. [16] *Ibid.*, XI, Dg. 35.

Thus, the tale of Vāsudeva which associates him in various ways with Śakambhara and Śākambharī is not just a legend. It is the mediaeval way of explaining the clan-designation and certainly it expresses the trend of rationalization.

The latter part of the same story gives a further clinch to the idea. In order to account for the rise of Vāsudeva as a ruler, Jayānaka introduces the story of a Vidyādhara, his blessings to Vāsudeva and the amorous affection of the earth towards the latter. The mediaeval man of course believed in these demi-gods called Vidyādhara, and in the miraculous power of their blessings. Further the rigid application of the law of causality had driven the mediaeval philosophers to recognize the category of unseen causes (*adṛishṭa*), where the seen causes failed to explain a phenomenon. In this frame of mind, Jayanaka's was the only intelligible explanation of the rise to power of the dynasty. Historians of the time veered round to this supernatural causation so much that it was crystallized into a literary idiom. The *Bṛihatkathā*, as preserved in later recensions, contains a cycle of stories spun around a nucleus which describes Naravāhanadatta, the son of Udayana, as having enjoyed the imperial suzerainty as a consequence of his marriage with a Vidyādhara princess. The biography of Harsha starts with a story in which Pushyabhūṭi helps an ascetic to attain the status of a Vidyādhara, and in the process obtains the blessings of Lakshmī. Bilhaṇa and Padmagupta tell similar tales of Vidyādharas and their help to Vikramāditya and Navasāhasāṅka in wearing the purple robe of sovereignty.

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[17] *Nirukta*, X, 26.

Accustomed to explain the rise of a new power on the basis of socio-political conditions and economic factors, the modern historian is bound to reject this explanation as puerile, unintelligible and unhistorical. To the mediaeval man, the theory of Jayānaka would have carried more conviction than the learned theses on socio-political conditions produced by the modern historian.

Viewed further in this context, Jayānaka's account of the origin of the Chāhamānas deepens the issue. Taking the cue from early historians whose existence is evidenced by the Ajmer Praśasti, Jayānaka built up the story of the descent of the Chāhamāna from sūrya and thus established his connection with the Ikshvākus of solar origin. Such myth-making is perceptible in several inscriptions and epics of the mediaeval period, and rests on numerous mythologico-historical strats in the *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition, Vedic literature and elsewhere. This mediaeval superstructure is however not mythological in the strict sense. Like the *varṇa-saṁkara* and *vrātya* theories propounded in the centuries preceding the Christian era, the mythological explanation for the kshatriya status of the Chāhamānas are on ultimate analysis depends on a legal fiction invented for the sake of understanding the social process of standardization. As the royal function of governing the people was the special duty (*guṇa-dharma*) of the kshatriyas, the social laws of the age required all the rulers to be kshatriyas. In the beginning of the early mediaeval age, the Brāhmaṇa dynasties of the Pallavas, the Kadambas, the Paramāras the Senas and others described themselves as brahmanical Kshatriyas (*brahma-kshatra*). When the rigour in the process of standardization increased, Brāhmaṇa dynasties suppressed their brahmanical origin and connected themselves in many ways with the Kshatriyas of yore. For this of course, mythological explanations were given. In such an explanation, based on a legal fiction, the explicator is believed to be real whereas the explicand is always problematic and the connection between the explicator and the explicand is invariably ideal and never historical. Thus, the Kshatriya status of the Ikshvākus was believed in the tradition to be real, that of the Chāhamānas was the point at issue and the relation between the Chāhamānas and the Ikshvākus through sūrya was ideal and not historical. But here the trend of rationalization asserted itself and the mediaeval historian failed to note this distinction between the ideal and the historical. Therefore Jayānaka made out a consistent and intelligent case for this ideal connection. He tried to reconcile the claims of the Chāhamānas—a dynasty of the Kali age—to the solar lineage, with the ancient tradition which described the solar dynasty of the Ikshvākus as having flourised in the age of Kali. And so he described the descent of the Chāhamānas from sūrya and made a reference to the four *gotras* of the Chāhamānas—Ikshvāku, Raghu, Rāma and Chāhamāna.

This trend of rationalization operated within the framework of an ideal system as revealed in the Vedas, the Āgamas and other authorities. To a mediaeval man in India, the world and the ever-flowing stream of events were intelligible only with reference to this system, and therefore they understood historical changes in terms of the re-arrangement of the ideas within the same system.

Like the story of the origin, where historical changes in society were considered, the life of Pṛithvīrāja III is viewed with the ideal system of social process but within the framework of chronology, formalized into a set pattern. It is unfolded in the five stages of the beginning, the effort, the possibility of success, certainty of success, the attainment of the result. These stages are however worked out from the philosophy of time as developed by the Hindus during this period. Since a man is regarded as a member of the society, these stages in his life are oriented towards and directed by that ideal system of social process. The war that Pṛithvīrāja III waged against the Muslims was for the preservation of the social order. Not only Jayānaka, but also the author of the *Lalitavigraharāja*,[18] consider these Hindu-Muslim wars as attempts to maintain the traditional social order and to check the forces of disintegration released by the invading Muslims. The inscription set up by Vīsaladeva bears repetition: "Frequently exterminating the *mlechchhas*, having once more made Āryāvarta what its name signifies—Victorious is the lord Vīsaladeva, the ruler of Śākambharī."[19]

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[18] *IA*, XX, 201 ff.

The scheme becomes more complex when Jayānaka looks back to the past in order to understand the workings of the social process and the causes of the disintegration of society and the restoration of the social order. It is said that Rāma in the hoary past effectively checked the forces of disintegration set in motion by the demoniac Rāvaṇa. So the mediaeval historian expected the drama to repeat itself when Pṛithvīrāja III tried to defeat the Muslim invader Muizz al-Dīn Muhammad of Ghorī.

There is a marked difference between the attitude of the modern historian with his exuberance of historical consciousness and the mediaeval writer living in an ideal world and steeped in the tradition of Vedico-Āgamic culture based upon the intrinsic authority of the revealed word. In the idealist view of the mediaeval man, inquiry does not take the historical direction but only the ideal, evidence is not derived from a reliable source of information but from authority, and validity does not lie so ✓ much in concurrence with the objective phenomenon as in logical consistency within the system.

In spite of its defects from the modern historical viewpoint, this mediaeval treatment has one great advantage. Here history is presented not as a graphic chart of the development of events but as a detailed map in which the events are located with ✓ reference to contemporary values. We do not simply get a narration of events but their interpretations according to the culture of the time. These interpretations may appear grotesque to the modern historian as history viewed from the modern angle would have been to the mediaeval man. If in his puckish humour Chronos could have placed the writings of modern historians before mediaeval thinkers, one wonders whether they would not have declared them to be sacrilegious, unintelligible and unhistorical. It will be readily agreed that both these viewpoints represent the historical mentality of the respective ages and that neither of them is final. They are the different stages in the evolution of historical ideas. Is it, therefore, historical to call these mediaeval explanations unhistorical in absolute sense?

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[19] Delhi-Siwalik Pillar inscription (c) of Vīsaladeva, *IA*, XIX, p. 215, verse 1.

APPENDIX

Imagination, which transforms musty parchments into a living panorama of past, is the magic wand of the historian. Without it, he is a mere chronicler, his works are only bloodless and lifeless charts, which map the dead bones of the past but which fail to recapture the world of earlier days, bustling with activity, and inhabited by men having ambitions, desires, fears and hesitations. However, this imagination is always controlled by the evidence in his possession. It plays within the framework of information, gleaned by the historian from his sources. Like the *śeshavad* inference of the mediaeval logicians of India, it fills the gap between two points on the basis of their invariable concomitance. But once it outsteps its own jurisdiction, like Frankenstein's monster, imagination is sure to destroy its master, the historian.

In the following two examples, one coming from the mediaeval age and the other from modern times, we find the unbridled imagination destroying the fabric of history. Creating a dream-pageant, the first has watered down the elements of reality by the use of symbolism. In the second, the historians have extracted a few facts from their sources, and reconstructed their picture with the colours of their imagination, without caring for what the sources in entirety have to say.

I. UNDER THE SHADOW OF A SYMBOLIST

The *Navasāhasāṅkacharita*,[1] a 10th century epic composed by the Paramāra court poet, Padmagupta, best illustrates the way in which, under the influence of the Jain tradition, poets inducted the elements of fiction into historical works, deflecting the current of ancient *itihāsa* from its simple course of matter-of-fact history. Bāṇa undoubtedly imposed a pattern of his own on the historical theme of Harsha's life, but all the characters in the *Harshacharita* are human. In this biography of Sindhurāja, however, Padmagupta goes far beyond Bāṇa, and steps into the realms of fiction, where he introduces his historical characters in the garb of animals and supernatural beings. Nevertheless, the element of fiction here is restricted to the presentation of facts and characters and it does not reduce the work to a mere fantasy by conjuring invented characters and giving purely imaginary accounts of events. It is likely a richly embroidered but semi-transparent curtain which heightens the effects of the picture it covers, but when removed discloses the reality. And therefore it is materially different from the legendary accounts of the *Purāṇas* and the early Greek epics, where in the words of Grote "the curtain is the picture" and "that curtain conceals nothing behind and cannot by any ingenuity be withdrawn".[2] On the other hand, the *Navasāhasāṅkacharita* shows us the picture, though it is distorted by a sort of literary cubism, as well as the lapidery frame of the author, built out of the common stock of beliefs and symbolism, expressing the ways of historical thinking and feeling.

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[1] The *Navasāhasāṅkacharita*, Ed. by V.S. Islampurkar, Bombay, 1895.

The decorative super-structure of fiction is raised on the basis of conventions, beliefs and archetypal characters, found in the popular works especially those of the *kathā* form. To preach their religious tenets to a wide audience, the Jains composed several *kathās* in Sanskrit, Jain Mahārāshṭrī and Apabhraṁśa. The Paramāra court, to which Padmagupta belonged, was under the influence of Jain scholars. Mahāsena, who composed the *Pradyumnacharita*, is described as having been worshipped by Muñja, the predecessor of Sindhurāja. Dhanapāla, the writer of the *Tilakamañjarī*, flourished a little later. Prabhāchandra and Śāntisheṇa were patronized by Bhoja. Sallakhaṇa, the minister of Arjunadeva, was probably the father of Āśādhara, the Jain scholar.[3] The influence of the symbolism, conventions and form of the *kathā* seems to have percolated into the Paramāra tradition of history through Jain scholars.

Sāhitya-śāstra recognizes three types of *kathā*-human, divine and mixed. The *Niśītha-chūrṇī*,[4] a Jain work of c. 6th century, classes the *Naravāhanadattakathā* as human, and distinguishes it from the divine and mixed stories of Magadhasenā and Taraṇgavatī. In the *Samaraīchchokahā*[5] and the *Uphmitibhavaprapañchakathā*.[6] Haribhadrasūri and Siddharshi respectively further discuss these three classes of story. The story of the mixed type with both human and divine characters became so popular in the early centuries of this era that Ānandavardhana had to deprecate the composition of historical works in the mixed style which introduces divine characters along with human. "Not that we dislike an exaggeration in the description of the royal might" the literary critic of Kashmir says, "but on the grounds of impropriety we certainly disapprove of introducing divine characters in historical works dealing with events concerning men."[7] In spite of this serious stricture, the popularity of historical works of the mixed type did not decline. In his *Śringāra-Prakāśa*,[8] the Paramāra king Bhoja approvingly mentions the *Līlāvatī* of Kutūhala.

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[2] Grote, *History of Greece*, I, 294.

[3] Nāthuram Premi, *Jaina Sāhitya aur Itihāśa*, p. 275.

[4] A. M. Ghatge, Narrative Literature in Jain Mahārāshtrē *ABORI*, XVI pp. 26-44.

The *Navasāhasāṅkacharita* very clearly shows how the tradition of *itihāsa* in the Paramāra region changed under the influence of the *kathā* literature in general, and the *Līlāvatī kathā* in particular. Since the story of the *Līlāvatī* centres round the Sātavāhana king Hāla, and evinces several features of the *Bṛihatkathā*, it seems that the nucleus of the former is derived from the same culture complex which gave rise to the *Bṛihatkathā* cycle of legends. In any case, the similarity between the two works can hardly be disputed.

The *Līlāvatī* describes the marriage of Hāla with the siṁhala princess Līlāvatī, who had two friends, Mahanumatī, the daughter of a Yaksha king, and Kuvalayamālā, the Vidyādhara princess. Once, Mādhavānila, the consort of Mahānumatī, was forcibly seized and carried away by the Nāgas to their underground abode of Pātāla. Through a cave near the Godāvarī, Hāla entered the subterranean region, killed a ferocious lion, who was guarding it, and liberated the Siddha prince Mādhavānila. With the help of an ascetic, he also killed Bhīshaṇānana, a demon king of the Godāvarī region, who had imprisoned the lover of Kuvalayamālā. Thus, having brought about the union of the friends of Līlāvatī and their lovers, Hāla eventually won the hand of the charming heroine, who was determined not to marry till her friends had also married.

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[5] Ed. by Jacobi, *Samaraīchchakahā* Calcutta, 1926, pp. 2-3.

[6] pp. 4-5. . [7] *Dhvanyāloka*, III.

[8] XI, also see A. N. Upadheye, The *Līlāvatī*, S. J. G. M., *Introduction*, p. 72.

The story may well be compared with that of the *Navasāhasāṅka-charita*, of which a summary is given below. While hunting on the slopes on the Vindhya mountains, Sindhurāja wounded a spotted antelope with an arrow inscribed with his name. The king, although he failed to chase the deer, managed to seize, from the beak of a royal swan, a necklace on which the name of Śaśiprabhā was incised. Mean-while the wounded deer reached the Nāga princess Śaśiprabhā, who extracted the arrow and read the name Sindhurāja inscribed on it. Each reading the other's name, Sindhurāja and Śaśiprabhā fell in love. A friend of Śaśiprabhā, by name Pāṭalā, disclosed to the Mālava prince Sindhurāja that Śaśiprabhā was the daughter of the Nāga king Śaṅkhapāla. In order to meet the Nāga princess, the love-sick prince at once proceeded to the banks of the Narmadā. But when he was engaged in conversation with her she was suddenly carried away by the invisible Nāgas to their capital Bhogavatī. Poor Sindhurāja flung himself into the stream with the intention of following his beloved. He entered the cave leading to the nether regions, braved many a hazard, and by his might drove away a lion and an elephant who were guarding the passage. Then his family deity Narmadā appeared and told him the way to obtain the Nāga damsel. Astrologers had predicted at the birth of Śaśiprabhā, (thus the king learnt from the deity) that she would be the consort of a paramount ruler of the human world, who would bring about the complete destruction of the demon-king Vajrāṅkuśa, a mighty enemy of the Nāgas. Her father Śaṅkhapāla had accordingly announced that the suitor of the princess should bring the golden lotuses from a pond in the pleasure-garden of Ratnavatī, the capital of Vajrāṅkuśa. That city was about fifty *gavyūtis* from the place where they stood, and could be reached through the hermitage of the sage Vaṅku. The king trudged on his way in search of the princess. On his way he met Śaśikhaṇḍa, who had been transformed into a monkey through a curse, but who was in fact a Vidyādhara king. The latter brought his forces to help Sindhurāja in his difficult expedition against Vajrāṅkuśa. On crossing the Gaṅgā, the Nāga army, under the leadership of the prince Chandrachūḍa. came and joined them. The allied forces assaulted the fort of Ratnavatī, and, after a fierce fight, Vajrāṅkuśa was killed. Ratnachūḍa the Nāga prince was appointed as the governor of the province. Golden lotuses were plucked and presented to Śaśiprabhā, who, at long last, was united with Sindhurāja.

Unlike a realistic chiaroscuro of history, in which facts are not allowed to fade away into fiction, the *Līlāvatī* and the *Navasāhasāṅkacharita* unfold the elusive unreality of a dream-pageant, in which historical personalities appear with mythical masks, intermingle with supernatural beings, Nāgas, Vidyādharas and Asuras, and love and live for fairy damsels. Besides this supernatural element, both works show similarity in details. The entering into the subterranean region by Hāla and Sindhurāja, their braving the attendant hazards of a ferocious lion and a rutting elephant, and liberating a king; the help of an ascetic, and the destruction of a demon-chief before winning the hand of the princess, are striking points of similarity between the Prākṛit novel and the Sanskrit epic. However, in spite of this fictional garb of the *divya-mānushī* novel, the Paramāra story has definitely a historical basis. Tear off their mythical masks and you will find all these figures who on the stage strut about as supernatural beings to be perfectly human and historical. The Vidyādharas, the Nāgas and the Rākshasas, who are brought into the story to lend the halo of a supernatural grandeur to a perfectly historical incident, are, in fact, historical people having mythical or tribal associations with superhuman beings.

This unusual use of symbolism to portray historical personages in mythical colours was possible not only because in contemporary times it existed in the *kathā* literature, and in Prākrit-Apabhraṁśa tradition and folk-lore but also because it was widely known and readily understood.

The Influence of the Jain Tradition of Itihāsa

From the beginning of the Early Mediaeval Age, the Jains tried to change and adapt the brahmanical *Purāṇas*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. In the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, they made various changes. According to them, Rāvaṇa was not a man-eating demon, as the brahmanical tradition represents him, nor was Sugrīva a monkey. Both belonged to the Vidyādhara stock which had two families, the Demon and the Monkey. Rāvaṇa was a Vidyādhara of the Demon family whereas Sugrīva and other monkey-chiefs belonged to the Monkey branch.[9] The latter were not beasts, but men. They were described as monkeys simply because they had the emblem of a monkey on their badges, archways and banners. Continuing the argument they say that their designation monkey is just a figurative form of expression, based upon the principle of association (*sāhacharya*). As by the use of synecdoche, the word 'lance' is made to indicate a person having a lance, so a person with the crest of a monkey is idiomatically described as a monkey.[10]

In the Jain literature, the Vidyādhara stories were at the height of their popularity during A.D. 600–1200. The *Paümachariya*, the *Padmacharita*, the *Uttamapurāṇa* and numerous other Jain works tell various tales of the Vidyādharas. Their influence was particularly strong in the central coastal region of the Bombay state. Here, the royal families of the Śilāhāras ruling at Goa, Kolhāpur and Thānā regarded themselves as the descendants of the Vidyādharas. In their documents, they proudly blaze abroad their Vidyādhara lineage, going back to the famous Jīmutavāhana,[11] who is mentioned as having given up his life in order to save a serpent from the attack of Garuḍa. The Śilāhāra ruler Aparājita Mṛikāṅka is described in a copper plate as a Vidyādhara by nature.[12] That these families belonged to the Vidyādhara stock was a widely current belief. It is mentioned in the *Karakaṇḍa-chariu*,[13] the *Udayasundarīkathā*,[14] the *Vikramāṅkadeva-charita*,[15] the *Karṇasundarī*[16] and other works.

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[9] Vimala, *Paumachariu*, III, 144 ff; V, 13 ff; Ravisheṇa, *Padmapurāṇa*, Kasi, 1958, Vol. I, Canto V, 377 ff; Canto VI, 189-91; Guṇabhadra, *Uttarapurāṇa*, Indore, V. S. 1975, Parvan 68, 256-257; 391 ff. Winternitz, *HIL*, II, p. 491. Also see *IHQ*, I, 1925, pp. 779 ff; V, 1929, pp. 281 ff.

[10] *Padmapurāṇa*, VI, 212-214.

[11] *IA*, IX, p. 33, lines 3-7; *EI*, III, p. 299.

[12] *IA*, IX, p. 33.

Of these families, the south Śilāhāras of Goa called themselves "the best of Siṁhala kings."[17] Others also recognized this claim. Referring to the defeat of an unidentified king of Goa, the Kadamba chroniclers record, "the lord of Laṅkā was subdued by by the Kadamba ruler though the latter did not have the bridge to his aid, nor the siege of a fortress, nor the efforts of the leaders of the monkey troops, nor even the energy of the son of Vasumitra."[18] The South Śilāhāra kings were thus popularly conceived as the rulers of Siṁhala, and by implication, as belonging to the demon branch of the Vidyādharas.

Relying on this belief, widely current in the cultural zone of Gujarat, Mālava and the Central Bombay, Padmagupta represented the Vidyādhara king Raṭṭarāja of the South Śilāhāra dynasty as the demon Vajrāṅkuśa, and the Vidyādhara ruler Aparājita Mṛigāṅka of the Northern Śilāhāra family as a Vidyādhara in the form of a monkey and with the name of Śaśikhaṇḍa. This name is significant as it is almost synonymous with Mṛigāṅka, both referring to the moon.

Like the Vidyādharas, the Nāgas are celebrated in the mediaeval *kathā* literature of the Jains. The *Nāyakumāracharüs*[19] of Pushpadanta and Māṇikkarāja, and the *Uttarapurāṇa* of Guṇabhadra contain Nāga legends. Moreover, several tribes of Central and Eastern Bombay and Northern Mysore identified themselves with the Nāgas. The Kadambas claimed to have descended from the Nāgas.[20] The Seṅdrakas called themselves "bhujaṅgānvaya" (belonging to the line of serpents)[21], and the Senavīras carried serpent banners (*phaṇidhvaja*).[22] The Nāgas of Bastar were the "Lord of Bhogavatī," the mythological capital of the Nāga king Vāsuki in the nether regions.[23] The Sindas of Karṇātaka belonged to the Nāga race.[24] They carried the hooded serpent banner (*nāga-dhvaja*) and had the hereditary title of *Bhogavatī-puravareśvara* "the supreme lord of Bhogavatī." Kings of another branch called themselves "the supreme lords of Karahāṭa" and carried a blue banner.

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[13] *Karakaṇḍachariu*, Ed. by H.L. Jain, Karañjā, 1934.

[14] The *Udayasundarīkathā*, G.O.S.

[15] Chandralekha described as a Vidyādhara princess belonged to the family of the Śilāhāras of Karahāṭa. *VDC*, Sarga IX.

[16] I, 13. [17] *EI*, III, p. 299. [18] *JBBRAS*, IX, p. 272.

[19] Ed. by Dr. H. L. Jain, Karanjā, Berar, 1933.

[20] *IA*, VII, p. 34.

[21] Fleet, Sanskrit and Old Canarese Inscriptions IA, VII, p. 110.

Padmagupta again relying on the dual associations of these Nāgas, the mythological and the historical, portrayed the historical Nāgas in supernatural colours. The Nāgas of the *Navasāhasāṅkacharita* were the Sindā kings of the Nāga stock.

Not only does the fertile imagination of Padmagupta transform historical persons into supernatural beings, but it also gives a fictional garb to historical incidents. The episode of the Vidyādhara Śaśikhaṇḍa is fairly illustrative in this respect. Relating his own story, Śaśikhaṇḍa says, "Once a rumour was spread that a representation of Vishṇu made of sapphire had risen out of the sea. The curious women of the town streamed out to see the wonder. My wife, overcome by curiosity, persuaded me to accompany her. So I leapt up with her into the air. Immediately the sea presented itself to our gaze. While I hovered over the sea on the blue cloudway, the diadem of my wife fell into the sea, and a great wave drew me into the depths of the nether world."[25] The same incident is recorded by the contemporary kannaḍa poet Ranna in his Gadāyuddha. Satyāśraya, the Chālukya king, routed the Śilāhāra ruler of Koṅkaṇa. "When Aparājita (*scil.* the Śaśikhaṇḍa of the *Navasāhasāṅkacharita* fled and entered the sea, Satyāśraya desisted from slaying him, since it is not consistent with true valour to kill men who enter water . . . . Hemmed in by ocean on one side and the sea of Satyāśraya's army on the other, Aparājita trembled like an insect."[26]

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[22] Fleet, *The Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Bombay, 1896. p. 299 fn. 4; *EC*, VI, Cm, 95.

[23] *EI*, XI, 60-65.

[24] *EC*, VII, HI, 20, 53; IX, p. 15.

[25] *Navasāhasāṅkacharita* XIII, 33-53.

[26] *IA*, XL, 1911, pp. 41 ff.

Śaśikhaṇḍa continues his story. "As I wandered about, I saw a maiden, who wore my wife's jewel. As she did not part with it in spite of my repeated entreaties, I wrenched it from her neck." In a direct manner the same episode is recorded in the Kadamba[27] documents where they state that Gūhalladeva II, the Kadamba contemporary of Aparājita Mṛigānka annihilated the wicked and cruel enemies of his crown and seized their riches and innumerable *jewels*." Likewise, the matrimonial alliance of the Paramāras and the Sindas is represented as a romantic adventure of Sindhurāja with a Nāga damsel Śaśiprabhā whose second name was Āśugā, a very strange name, almost unique in Sanskrit literature. In all probabilities, it is a sanskritized form of a Canarese word *achchuga* meaning beloved.

Thus in the *Navasāhasāṅkacharita*, we find the mediaeval world itself rising from the limbo of oblivion and telling its story in its own characteristically symbolic language. It is true that the account is draped in contemporary concepts and common beliefs, and the excessive use of symbolism has deprived the history some of its particularity and obscured its meaning. Fortunately other mediaeval historians of India did not follow the example of the Paramara court historian.

II. THE MEDIAEVAL AND THE MODERN MYTHS

THE AGNI–KULA LEGEND:

No theme is more rewarding for the study of the historical thought and methods of the mediaeval India than the Agni-kula legend, the sphinx of Indian history, which has made the historians wander in the marshy fields of speculation for more than 1000 years. It first occurs in the 10th century A. D., and since than the historians have tried to solve its mystery without any success. After the *Navasāhasāṅkacharita*,[28] the legend recurs in the *Tilakamañjarī* of Dhanapāla, several Paramāra inscriptions, the documents of the Chāhamānas, the *Pṛithvīrāja-Raso* of Chanda Bardai and innumerable bardic chronicles. In the first quarter of the 17th century it was again revived by Muhnot Naiṇsī,[29] the

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[27] G.M. Moraes, *Kadamba Kula*, Bombay, 1931, p. 171.

[28] XI, 64-71.

[29] I, p. 19, Nāgarī Prachāriṇī Sabhā Edition, Benares.

Abul Fazl of Rājasthān and in the first quarter of the 19th, Sūrajamala[30] Mishran, the greatest Hindu historian of his time wielded his facile pen over it. After him, the theme was dragged into the political arena, and a royal fight was waged between the Nationalist historians, who felt indignat at their past glory being sullied and took up cudgels to defend the honour of the Rajput ancestry, and the British historians who, probably because of an unconscious urge to prove that the earlier rulers of India were foreigners like themselves, tried to interpret the legend as indicative of the foreign origin of the Rajputs.

All writers belonging to the Rajasthan school of history Surajmal Mishran, M. M. Gaurishankar Hirachand Ojha, Devi Prasad, Bisheswar Nath Reu, Jagdish Singh Gahalot and Dr. Mathuradal Sharma either bypassed or explained away the Agni-kula legend, and emphasized instead the tradition of the solar origin of the Rajputs. True to the Indian spirit of *itihāsa*, some of them even tried to reconcile both the traditions by maintaining the identity of Agni and Sūrya. But none of them squarely faced the Agni-kula myth and attempted to give its explanation. On the other hand, the gallant knights of modern scholarship, Col. James Tod, William Crooke, Vincent Smith, D. R. Bhandarkar and others tilted at a desolate mediaeval windmill with shining lances of modern steel. Thus, referring to the story of the Agni-kula, Tod says,

> "The period of the grand convocation of gods on Mount Ābu, to regenerate the warrior race of Hind, and to incite them against the infidel races who had spread over the land is dated so far back as the opening of the second age of the Hindus: A point which we shall not dispute . . . . Let us here pause for a moment before we proceed With the chronicle, and inquire who were these warriors, thus regenerated to fight the battles of Brahmanism, and brought within the pale of their faith. They must have been either the aboriginal debased classes, raised to moral importance by the ministers of the pervading religion, or foreign races who had obtained a footing amongst them. The contrasted physical appearance will decide the

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[30] *Vaṁśa-bhāskara*, pp. 515.

> question. The aborigines are dark, dimunitive, and ill-favoured; the Agni-kulas are of good stature, and fair, with prominent features, like those of the Parthian kings. The ideas which pervade their martial poetry are such as held by the Scythians in distant ages, and which Brahmanism has failed to eradicate; while the tumuli, containing ashes and arms, discovered throughout India, especially in the south about Gaulkunda, where the Chauhans held sway, indicate the nomadic warrior of the north as the proselyte of Mount Ābū."[31]

The ethnological similarities of the Agni-kula races to the Parthians, who a millenium before merged in Hindu society without leaving for historians their anthropological indices; the comparison of Rajput poetry with the non-existent scythian literature; and, last but not the least, the association of the megalithic tombs of South India with the Scythians and the Chauhans;—in those early days, how easily a great scholar could pack so many false theories into one paragraph. In Tod's arguments, one can clearly detect an echo of the crude ideas of cultural anthropology connected with dilettante antiquarianism of the 19th century Europe again, the modern soul in a mediaeval body.

After Tod, Vincent Smith records his impressions,

> "A familiar legend appearing in the *Chand Raisā* and other later documents in various forms groups together four Rajput clans—the Pawar (Paramāra), Parihāra (Pratihāra), Chauhān (Chāhumāna), and Solaṅkī or Chaulukya—as being *Agni-kula*, or 'fire-born', originating from a sacrificial fire-pit at Mount Ābū in Southern Rājputānā. The myth seems to express the historical truths that the four clans named are related, and all arose in Southern Rājputānā; and further, as Mr. Crooke justly observes, it 'represents a rite of purgation by fire, the scene of which was in Sothern Rājputānā, whereby the impurity of the foreigners was removed and they became fitted to enter the Hindu caste system."[32]

[31] Lieut. Col. James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rājasthan*, Oxford, 1920, Vol. III, pp. 1444-45.

[32] Vincent A. Smith, *The Early History of India*, Oxford, 1924, p. 428.

This historian formulated his theory without substantiating the basic assumption that the story of the fire-pit indicated the rite of purgation.

Neither the Rājasthān school nor the imperialist historians recognized the simple facts that to attack a legend simply because it is a legend is as uncritical as to believe it credulously, and that only after having studied its development through the ages can a scholar hope to learn anything from it. Like an onion, the truth in the Agni-kula legend is wrapped up in numerous covers which should be peeled off to get at the core.

This mysterious legend first occurs in the *Navaśāhasāṅkacharita*. Introducing his royal master Sindhurāja to the sage Vaṅku, Ramāṅgada says, "At the Arbuda Mountain, there was a hermitage of Vasishṭha where Viśvāmitra came and forcibly seized the desire-yielding cow. To repel the aggression of Viśvāmitra, the sage threw an oblation into the fire in accompaniment of the incantation formula. From fire sprang up a man, wearing a golden crown and armour, and holding a bow. Since, vanquishing the enemy, he brought back the cow, Vasishṭha gave him the significant name Paramāra, meaning "the slayer of enemies". In due course, Sindhurāja flourished in the line initiated by Paramāra.[33]

After the *Navasāhasāṅkacharita*, the *Tilakamañjarī*[34] and several Paramāra inscriptions[35] allude to the legend—the earliest epigraphic reference to it being in the Vasantagadh inscription of Pūrṇapāla dated A. D. 1049.[36] Earlier Paramāra inscriptions do not mention this story. Nor do they allude to the eponymous hero, Paramāra. In all probability, therefore, the story was framed by Padmagupta to explain the clan name Paramāra.

This mythological story, like many others in the historical novels and inscriptions of the age regarding the origins of the Rājput dynasties, is a superscription over several mythological layers found in the Purāṇas and epics. It is however difficult to know after the passage of time whether the underlying layers of the Puranic mythology bear any basic relation to the novelistic super-structure or merely serve as a ground which though basically unconnected, provides opportunities for imagination to build its own edifice. Thus the conflict of Viśvamitra and Vasishṭha and the consequent creation of the tribes of the Śakas, Yavanas, Pablavas and Pāradas are narrated in the *Mahābhārata*[37] and the *Ramāyaṇa*,[38] in the form of an elaborate legend which in fact began to develop in the Vedic period. The story as given in the *Rāmāyaṇa* states that king Viśvāmitra once came to the hermitage of Vasishṭha where he was hospitably entertained. The wonderous cow of Vasishṭha, which supplied all the dainties of the feast, excited covetousness in the heart of the Gādhi king Viśvāmitra who first offered a hundred thousand common cows in exchange but later, when this price was refused, proceeded to remove the cow by force. The cow, however, bellowed aloud, intimating to Vasishṭha that "the strength of the Brāhmaṇa is superior to that of the Kshatriyas and therefore he should resist this wanton aggression of Viśvāmitra." She then created hundreds of Pahlavas who destroyed the entire host of Viśvāmitra, but were slain by him in their turn. Next Śakas and Yavanas, were called into existence, and consumed the king's soldiers, but were later destroyed by Viśvāmitra. Then a hundred sons of the king armed with various weapons attacked Vaśiṣṭha with great fury, but they were all consumed to ashes by the blast from the mouth of the sage. Utterly vanquished, Viśvāmitra betook himself to austerities and thereby obtained a vision of Mahādeva, who revealed to him the science of arms in all its branches and gave him the celestial weapons. Thus armed, Viśvāmitra burnt the hermitage of Vasishṭha and launched his fiery missiles on the sage. They were, however, quenched by the *brahma-daṇḍa*, i. e. the staff of the Brāhmaṇa. All the celestial missiles—the noose of Brahmā, Kāla and Varuṇa, the discus of Vishṇu and the trident of Śiva were hurled at Vasishṭha, but with no effect. Finally, to the intense consternation of all gods, Viśvāmitra shot the *brahmāstra*, but this too proved ineffectual. Vasishṭha then assumed a direful appearance: Jets of fire mingled with smoke darted from the pores of his body: the brahmanical mace blazed in his hand like a smokeless mundane conflagration or a second sceptre of Yama." Being appeased by the *munis*, who proclaimed his superiority over his rival, the sage stayed his vengeance and Viśvāmitra exclaimed with a groan, "Shame on a kshattriya's. The prowess of Brahma's might alone is strength."[39]

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[33] XI, 64-71. [34] I, 39.

[35] *EI*, IX, 13; IX, 155; *IA*, 1914, XLIII, 193 n; *EI*, II, 183, etc.

[36] *EI*, IX, p. 13 verse 3.

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[37] *Vana*, Ch. 82. [38] *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Bālakāṇda*, Chapters 54-56.

According to Pargiter,[40] two traditions have been confused in this story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Devarāj Vasishṭha was the priest of Ayodhyā in the reigns of Trayyāruṇa and Satyavrata. Satyavrata-Triśaṅku was banished by his father and was kept in exile by Vasishṭha. Viśvāmitra however championed the cause of Satyavrata-Triśanku and restored him to his paternal kingdom. In gratitude, therefore, Satyavrata appointed Viśvāmitra as the priest of the Ikshvākus in Ayodhyā. Vaśishṭha, thus deprived of kingdom and priesthood, bore a deadly enmity towards Viśvāmitra.

The other tradition is that of Atharvanidhi Vasishṭha who flourished after a few generations in the reign-period of Bāhu, who was driven away from his kingdom by the Haihaya-Tālajanghas and the tribes of Śakas, Yavanas, Kambojas, Yavanas, Pāradas and Pahlavas. Later on, Sagara, the son of Bāhu, regained his kingdom and routed the invaders. He was determined to exterminate the Pāradas, the Pahlavas, the Yavanas and the Śakas but Atharvanidhi Vasishṭha intervened and made him spare them. This Atharvanidhi Vasishṭha "is confused with Devarāja Vasishṭha in brahmanical tales, and thus his connexion with the sakas and other tribes led to the absurd detail in the fables about the contest between Vasishṭha and Viśvāmitra, that Vasishṭha's cow created all those and other tribes to fight against Visvāmitra". Besides these two traditions, some other elements have also been fused, of which the symbolism of the brahmanical cow—*Brahma-gavi* is pertinent to the subject. *Brahma-gavi* denotes 'the wealth of a Brāhmaṇa'. Several stories of the seizure of cows of the Brāhmaṇas with disastrous results have been told in the *Atharvaveda*[41] and elsewhere. The *Brahma-gavi* of Vasishṭha is described in the

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[39] *Rāmāyaṇa*, I, 56, 19 ff.

[40] *JRAS*, 1919, pp. 355 ff; *Ancient Indian Historical Traditions*, p. 206 ff.

[41] V, 18. See also R. B. Pandey, 'The Brahma-gavi and the Vaitahavyas in the Atharvaveda and the Purāṇas *Bhārati*,' *The Bulletin of the College of Indology*, BHE, Vārāṇasī Vol. I, pp. 1-8.

Purāṇas as having been seized by Satyavrata-Triśanku to feed the family of Viśvamitra. When the latter had retired to Sāgarānupa country for austerities. The idea developed in the *Rāmāyaṇa* as the forcible seizure of Vasishṭha's cow by Viśvāmitra. It probably indicates that the priesthood of the Ikshvāku dynasty was taken away from Vasishṭha and that Viśvāmitra was invested with it. Thus, in earlier stages of the legend, the cow was in no way connected with the creation of the Śakas, the Yavanas and others.

The legend, as we find it in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, must have been developed by the 3rd century A.D., and thus it was current for about seven centuries before Padmagupta seized it. During this period, it was, by and large, used for explaining the change of Viśvāmitra's caste and to show the brahmanical superiority over the kshatriyas, but was not utilized to account for the origin of the non-aryan tribes of the Śakas and others. For this purpose, the *Vrātya* theory as propounded by Manu,[42] held the field. It does not therefore, seem probable that by utilizing the *Rāmāyaṇa* legend, Padmagupta intended to indicate that the Paramāras were non-aryans like the Pahlavas, the Śakas and the Yavanas who emanated from the wonder-working cow of Vasishṭha. Moreover, these non-aryan people by the 11th century A.D. were completely merged in the Leviathan of Indian society and were almost indistinguishable from other people of the country. Further theoretically they were held in low esteem as degraded *kshatriyas*,[43] and so Padmagupta, who was out to laud the Paramāras, would not have presented his patron in such unsavoury light.

Evidently, the motive of Padmagupta was to explain the origin of the Paramāras. Such mythological interpretations of the origins of a clan or caste were a part of the mediaeval trend of the systematization of the *varṇāśrama* organization. From the 6th-7th century A.D., there had been constant attempts to bring order in the Varṇa institution which had become loose because of the influx of the foreign tribes and the rise of the āgamic and other religious sects. Thus the royal epigraphs of the early Mediaeval India bestow high praises on kings who tried to re-establish the religious duties of the different castes and stages of life. The inscription of Saṁkshobha (A.D. 529) describes him as "engaged in the establishment of *varṇa* and *āśrama*.[44] Avantivarman, the Maukhari chief is mentioned as Vishṇu, the wielder of discus, to set up the institutions of caste and āśraṁa. Similarly, Bhāskara-varman, the king of Kāmarūpa, is said to have been created by Brahmā for the specific purpose of laying down afresh the rules and regulations of *varṇa* and *āśrama*, which were then uprooted.[45] Even the Buddhist king Dharmapāla is eulogized in Pāla records as a righteous king who "had established the people of different *varṇas* in their respective duties."[46] Chapters dealing with the duties of various castes were added in several *Purāṇas* during this period.[47] Likewise, many later *smṛitis* ascribed to this age dilate over this topic. Thus, inscriptions and sacred literature indicate the attempts of smārta sectaries to systematize the order of *varṇa*.

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[42] X, 43-44; for other references see Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. I, pt. II, p. 96.

[43] *Manu Smṛiti*, X, 43-44.

It was probably because of this movement that several practices prevalent in society were taken note of, and brought into conformity with principles enunciated in the scriptures. Of this the *Brahma-kshatra* is a fair instance. The Guhilas and the Senas in Northern India were described in inscriptions as *Brahma-kshatras*.[48] Some of the dynasties of the South as also of the South East Asia were mentioned as belonging to the family of *Brahma-kshatras*.[49] It is sometimes explained as the name of a family in which both the Kshatriyas and the brāhmaṇas flourished. There is however sufficient evidence to indicate that this caste was formed by Brāhmaṇas who discarded their priestly profession for martial pursuits. The Tālagunda inscrition, which mentions that the ancestors of Mayūravarman exchanged the ladles of sacrifice for swords and bows, bears out the inference.[50] The fact that the *Brahma-kshatra* family of the Guhilas is said to have orginated from Guhadatta, a *mahīdeva* (which generally means a Brāhmaṇa) and *vipra-kula-nandana*, who had emigrated from Ānandapura, corroborates[51] it. Likewise, the Bijolian inscription of the time of Someśvara Chāhamāna, states that the Chāhamānas are the descendants of Sāmanta, a *vipra* from Ahichchhatrā.[52] Thus, it seems that those Brāhmaṇas who did not follow the duties prescribed to them in the scriptures, and were engaged in the martial pursuits of Kshatriyas, were relegated to the lower caste and were termed *Brahma-kshatras*.

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[44] D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, Vol. I, p. 375.

[45] *Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī*, pp. 15-16. [46] *EI*, XVIII, p. 305.

[47] For example the *Pārāśara Smṛiti*, Ch. VI; the *Brahma Khaṇḍa* of the *Padmapurāṇa*. see Hazra, *Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, pp. 115 ff.

[48] Inscriptions of Bengal, III, p. 46, verse 15; p. 111, p. 44 fn. 3; *PTOC*, II, pp. 343 ff; *EC*, VII, Shikarpur, 109, 110, 130; See also *IA*, XL, pp. 35 ff. The *Piṅgalasūtra-vṛitti* of Halayudha quoted by M. M. G. H. Ojha, *Udaypur Rājya Kā Itihāsa*, p. 79.

[49] R. C. Majumbar, *Champā* (Inscriptions), pp. 10, 45.

Some *Brahma-kshatra* dynasties frankly admitted the fact that their ancestors preferred the more lucrative and adventurous profession of the kshatriyas to the nobler yet less splendid duties of the priestly class, whereas others concocted stories to explain the change. The Jodhpur inscription of the Pratihāra Bauka, explicitly recorded that the kshatriya Pratihāras were descended from Brāhmaṇa Harichandra.[53] There is nothing improbable in the Pratihāras being Brāhmaṇas. In fact, the Pratihāra or the Pratihārtṛi were the designations of a priestly group. The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* in a allegorical passage mentions "Austere fervour was the house-holder; prayer itself was the *brahmā* priest, truth was the *hotā* . . . the past was the *prastotṛi* and the future was their *pratihārtṛi* priest.[54] According to the *Harivaṁśa*, these *pratihārtṛi* priests came out of the belly of the Purusha.[55]

But the imperial dynasty of the Pratihāras explained the clan name Pratihāra by connecting it with Lakshmaṇa, who acted as a chamberlain for his brother Rāma[56] and thus related the dynasty with the Ikshvākus of Ayodhyā.

The mediaeval trend of the systematization of *varṇas*, was preceded by the two-pronged social process of standardization which consisted firstly in the acculturation or, to be more specific, in the Saṁskritization of the foreign elements, their accomodation with the Saṁskrit elements and finally their absorption in society and secondly in standardizing the social institutions of the Aryan society in accordance with the norms of the sacred scriptures. This process of standardization started quite early in history and lasted to the advent of the mediaeval age. It resulted in the formation of a bewildering mass of conflicting mythological legends contained in the *Purāṇas*. Thus, the process of acculturation is reflected in the mythological sphere by stories connecting the non-Aryan or semi-Aryan tribes with the Vedic sages. The Bhāradrājas, the Ātreyas, the Hārītas and others are mentioned in the list of fierce *mlechchhas* people along with the barbarous tribes of the north and north-west.[57]

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[50] *Select Inscriptions*, p. 451.

[51] For an elaborate discussion on the subject see D. R. Bhandarkar, Guhilots, *JASB*, V, No. 6. pp. 167-187.

[52] *EI*, XXVI, p. 103 ff. Verse 12.

[53] *EI*, XVIII, p. 95 verse 5.

[54] *Taitt. Br.* III, 12, 9, 2.

[55] *Harivaṁśa*, *Bhavishyaparvan*, Ch. 10, v. 8.

[56] *EI*, XVIII, p. 107 verse 3.

For the other process of standardization, we may again take the example of the Pratihāra Brāhmaṇas. The *Purāṇas* have devised a suitable ancestry for them. It is stated that Priyavrata the son of Svāyambhuva Manu, married the daughter of the Prajāpati Karddama from whom he got Agnīdhra. His descendants were Nābhi, Ṛishabha and Bharata. The last named king was of religious disposition and was reborn as a Brāhmaṇa. He was succeeded by Sumati, Parameshṭha, Pratihārtri, Udgītha, Prastotṛa, etc. The story clearly evinces an attempt to relate the priestly groups of Agnīdhra, Pratihārtri, Udgītha and Prastotri with the Bharatas and the Karddamas.[58]

Thus, broadly speaking, the process of standardization resulted in a mass of Purānic mythology and the movement of systematization of *varṇas* in the early mediaeval period is reflected in several legends found in mediaeval inscriptions and historical novels of the mediaeval age.

The Agni-Kula legend and the origin of Paramāras

The *brahma-kshatra* theory current during the process of systematization of *varṇas* in the mediaeval period was utilized to explain the origin of the Paramāras also. Thus, Halāyudha, the court-poet of Vākpati-Muñja, describes his royal patron as *brahma-kshatra*,[59] which indicates that the Paramāras were regarded as the kshatriya descendants of the Brāhmaṇas, before Padmagupta devised the Agni-kula legend in the *Navasāhesānkacharita*.

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[57] *Mahābhārata*, *Bhīshmaparvan*, VI, 9. 68-69; *Vāmana Purāṇa*, XIII, 40-42; S. B. Chaudhari, *The Ethnic Settlements in Ancient India*, p. 134.

[58] For example, *Vishṇu Purāṇa*, Tr. by W. H. Wilson, Vol. II, pp. 107 ff.

The epic of the court-poet Padmagupta represents the uppermost layer of the Paramāra mythology. Though this Agni-kula legend is the development of the Rāmāyaṇa story of the wonderous cow, mythologically the two seem to be unconnected. Early mythological layers of the Agni-kula legend lay elsewhere.

The poet introduced three new elements—the Agni-kuṇḍa, the Arbuda mountain and the Paramāras and thus transformed the *Rāmāyaṇa* story into the Agni-kula legend. The Arbuda mountain is of course associated with Vasishtḥa in the *Mahābhārata*[60] and the *Arbuda-khaṇḍa* of the *Skanda-purāṇa*,[61] but neither of the works mention any *agni-kuṇḍa* at the mountain, although the *Arbuda-khaṇḍa* recounts several stories connected with the mountain and describes all the religious places there.

There are however a few tribes, which in the early centuries of the Christian era, were connected with Agni. The Agnīdhras are mentioned in the *Purāṇas* as inhabiting the northern zone with the Trigartas, the Saiandhavas and the Dāśerakas.[62] According to the *Mārkaṇḍeya*[63] and the *Vishṇu*,[64] Agnīdhra was the son of Priyavrata through Kāmyā, the daughter of Karddama. The dynasty, it is stated, developed into a family of Brāhmaṇas. But the Agnīdhras, though their names indicate their relation with fire, are not mythologically connected with Agni.

The Āgneyas are, however, described as descended from Agni. A late tradition in the *Anuśāsana parvan*[65] narrates a tale of the Āgneya Sudarśana, who though born on the bank of the Narmadā, performed austerities at Kurukshetra. The *Bhāgavata-*

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[59] *Piṁgala Sūtra Vṛitti*, as quoted by M. M. G. H. Ojha in his *Udayapur Ka Itihāsa*, p. 79.

[60] *Mahābhārata*, Āraṇyaka (critical Ed. Poona), Ch. 80, vv. 74-75.

[61] *Arbuda, Prabhāsa-Khaṇḍa* Ch. I-III.

[62] *Mārkaṇḍeya*, Canto LVIII, verses 43-44.

[63] *Ibid.*, Canto LIII. [64] II, Ch. I, verses 5-12.

[65] *Mahābhārata, Anuśāsana*, II, 4-58.

Purāṇa[66] closely links up the Āgneya Sudarśana with the Dhārshṭakas—a *Brahma-kshatra* people, who, according to other sources,[67] belonged to the kshatriya clan inhabiting the Bāhlīka country. The *Rāmayaṇa*[68] also alludes to a sage called Āgneya Śalyakartana who dwelt at Kurukshetra. The *Vanaparvan*[69] mentions the Āgneyas along with the Bhadras, the Patritikas, the Mālavas and the Dāśerakas. Thus, the Āgneyas are placed in several districts from Kurukshetra to the Narmmadā.

Likewise the *Bhāgavata-Puraṇa*,[70] composed in *circa* 7th century states that in the line of Narishyanta, Agni himself was born as the sage Agniveśya, who belonged to the family of the Jātukarṇyas and after him the whole dynasty developed into the family of the Agniveśya Brāhmaṇas. In the grammatical tradition, the Agniveśyas are compounded together with the Dāśerakas. Thus in a *sūtra* which permits the collocation of kindred *gotras*, the *Jainendra-Vyākaraṇa*[71] composed by Devanandi in c. 550-600 A.D., frames the compound *agniveśa-daśerakāḥ*. The *kāśikā*[72] a mediaeval work of grammar, also mentions it. The Dāśerakas, however, belonged to the Vasishṭha family. The *Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra*[73] and the *Matsya-Purāṇa*[74] list them under the Vāsishṭhas. The *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* also places the Āgniveśa Brāhmaṇas under the Jātukarṇyas, who have Vasishṭha *gotra*. Lastly, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[75] in both of its lists of teachers, groups Agniveśa with Kauṇḍinya, the latter belong to the Vasishtha[76] family. Thus, there can hardly be any reasonable doubt that the Agniveśas had Vasishṭha *gotra*.

The Dāśerakas were a tribe. The word *gaṇa* is almost always added to their name in the *Purāṇas*[77] and the *Mahābhārata*. The geographical chapter of the *Purāṇas* and the *Vanaparvan* mention them along with the Mālavas, whereas the *Udyogaparvan*[78] speaks of them in the collocation of the Daśārṇas and the Prabhadras. Rājaśekhara[79] (10th century A.D.) places them between Surāshtra and Travaṇa, while Hemachandra in his lexicon treats Dāśeraka and the *māravas* (the inhabitants of *maru-bhūmi*) as synonyms.[80] Hence if the *sūtra* of the grammatical tradition of the early mediaeval period, grouping together the two kindred *gotras* of the Dāśrakas and the Agniveśas can be taken to indicate their geographical contiguity, it may be stated that the Agniveśas were inhabiting the eastern zone somewhere between Daśārṇa and the Marubhumi.

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[66] *Bhāgavata*, IX, 2, 17-18.

[67] Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Traditions*, p. 256.

[68] *Rāmāyaṇa*, II, Ch. 73, 3 ff. [69] *Mahābhārata*, III, 253, 19-20.

[70] IX, 2, 21-22.

[71] Devanandi, *Jainendra-Vyākaraṇa*, Kasi, 1956, I, 4, 140 (p. 85).

[72] Ed. by Bāla sastri, Kasi, 1898, II, 4, 68.

[73] J. Brough, *The Early Brahmanical System of Gotra and Pravara*, p. 178.

[74] *Ibid.*, p. 184. [75] XIV, 5, 5, 20-21; 7, 3, 26.

[76] Brough, *op. cit.* p. 180.

[77] *Mārkaṇḍeya*, LVII, 40. For other references see Pargiter, *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, p. 321 n.

Thus, before the advent of the early mediaeval period, there was a group of *agni-kula* families of the *Brāhmaṇas*. The group had certain marked cultural characteristics. All the three families comprising the group are connected with Agni. The Āgneyas and the Agniveśas are specifically stated to have originated from Agni. Negatively, none of them is linked up with the solar and lunar kshatriyas. Secondly the group consisted of the *Brahma-kshatra* people. The Agnīdhras belonged to the line of the kshatriya king Priyavrata, which later on merged into a family of the Brāhmaṇas. The Āgneya Brāhmaṇas also descended from a kshatriya dynasty. Similarly, the Agniveśas are related to the kshatriya line of Narishyanta, which developed into the Brāhmaṇa family. Lastly, the whole group was inhabiting the eastern zone in c. 6th century A.D.

It is curious to note that the Paramāras also share these characteristics. They are recorded as having originated from Agni and as having belonged to the *Brahma-kshatra* caste of *Vahni-vaṁśa*. Further, they inhabited the area associated with Agni-kula. Lastly, like the Agniveśya Brāhmaṇas they had the *gotra* of Vasishtḥa. Although, the conclusive evidence for identifying the Paramāras with Agniveśas is lacking, the *gotra*, area of habitation, the caste and mythological traditions make it all but certain.

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[78] Chap. L. 47.

[79] *Kāvyamīmāṁsā*, (G. O. S.) Baroda, 1934, Ch. XVII, p. 94.

[80] For references see Dasharatha Sharma, Deśeraka Janapada, *Rājasthāna Bhāratī*, January, 1956 pp. 49-51.

It finds further support from a confused tradition recorded in the Nagpur inscription of the Mālava kings. It states that Rājyavardhana, Viśāla, Dhrammadhṛik, Satyaketu and Pṛithukīrti flourished in the Paramāra line.[81] The *Vishṇu Purāṇa*[82] makes out Rājyavardhana and Viśāla to be the descendants of Nariśhyanta, the son of Marutta. A late tradition in the *Bhāgarata Purāṇa*,[83] however, describes the Agniveśa Brāhmaṇas as the progeny of Narishyanta. It is true that the Narishyanta of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is the son of Manu whereas Narishyanta described in the *Vishṇu Purāṇa* as the ancestor of Rājyavardhana is described as the son of Marutta in the line of Nābhāga. But the view of Pargiter[84] seems to be right that the late *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* has confused the Narishyanta of the Nābhāga line with the Narishyanta, son of Manu. It is corroborated by facts that the name of Narishyanta has been left out by the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* from the list of kings in the line of Nābhāga and that all the earlier *Purāṇas* either do not list the names of the descendants of Narishyanta, the son of Manu, or merely mention the Śakas as his progeny.

Thus, two traditions seem to have been current in *circa* 7th century A. D. According to one, the line of Narishyanta developed into the family of Agniveśa Brāhmaṇas whereas the other mentioned the Vaiśāli kings as his descendants. The second tradition is found in earlier *Purāṇas* and is consistently copied by later compositions. The first occurs only in one late *Purāṇa* and there too in a confused manner. Still, this indicates that in c. 7th century A.D., the origin both of the Agniveśas and the Vaiśāli kings was traced to Narishyanta. The Vaiśāli kings are again linked up with the Paramāras in a Paramāra record and thus the tradition, although confused, supplies the corroborative evidence for identifying the Paramāras with Agniveśas.

Analysis thus reveals that the *Agni-kuṇḍa* story of the *Navasāhasāṅka-charita* is only the uppermost layer of the tradition of the Paramāra origin and that *Agni-kuṇḍa* story rests on the *Agni-kula* mythology of the *Purāṇas* and epics. The founder of the family in the *Agni-kula* mythology is represented as the god

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[81] *EI*, II, p. 183, verse 4. [82] IV, I, 34-50. [83] IX, 2, 21-22.

[84] *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, p. 256, and fn. 8.

Agni in the form of a sage who, in the *Agni-kuṇḍa* story of the *Navasāhasāṅkacharita*, is transformed into the sacred fire (*Agni*) of the sacrificial pit. Since Agniveśa Brāhmaṇas belonged to the Vasishṭha family, Agni in the *Agni-kuṇḍa* (fire-pit) is said to have been enkindled by the sage Vasishṭha and as the Arbuda mountain was associated both with Vasishṭha and the earlier Paramāras, the fire-pit is located there.

There are still earlier layers. The *Agnikula* group in the *Purāṇas* is related to the Balhīka culture-complex. The Agnīdhras are said to have descended from the daughter of the Prajāpati Karddama sometimes styled the king of Vāhlī.[85] According to H. C. Raychaudhari, Karddama was the name of the ruling family of Bactria which took its name from the river Karddama.[86] This river has been now correctly identified with the Zarafshan which flows through Bokhara. Similarly, the Āgneyas were connected with the Dhārshṭakas,[87] and ancient Kshatriya clan which once inhabited Bactria. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,[88] the epics[89] and the *Purāṇas*[90] contain quite a few mythological stories about these Bactrian aryans, an analysis of which is here uncalled for.

The Development of the Agni-Kuṇḍa story

After the *Navasāhasāṅkacharita*, the *Tilakamañjarī* and numerous Paramāra inscriptions allude to the *Agni-Kuṇḍa* legend. The later recensions of the *Pṛithvīrāja Raso*[91] further develops it. According to it "Viśvāmitra, Gautama, Agastya and other sages began a great sacrifice on Mount Ābū. Demons showered down flesh, blood, bones, wine and many other impure things. Tormented by this desecration, Vasishṭha created from the *Agni-kuṇḍa* three warriors, Pratihāra, Chaulukya and Paramāra, but none of these succeeded in vanquishing the *rākshasas*. Vasishtḥa, therefore, dug a new pit, and as a result oblations poured into it, there issued forth a four-armed figure, of lofty stature, red-coloured, red-faced, and bearing weapons in all his hands. The sages named him Chāhuvāna. With the assistance of Āśāpurī, the warrior defeated the *daityas* and drove them back to nether regions." The story is retold by several late mediaeval writers, such as Mūlā Naiṇasī and Abul Fazl, and by modern chroniclers like Suryamala Mishran and Jodharāja.

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[85] *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, Ch. LIII.

[86] The Kārddamaka kings, *IHQ*, IX, 37-39; *The Political History of Ancient India*, p. 363. fn.

[87] *Ancient Indian Historical Traditions*, p. 256.

[88] *SB*, XII, 9, 3, 3.

[89] *IHQ*, IX, 37, ff; *Sabhāparvan*, II 27, 22.

[90] *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, Ch. *LII*. S. B. Chaudhuri, *Ethnic Settlements in Ancient India* 1955, p. 110.

[91] Pt. I, pp. 45-51.

However, none of the early records of the Pratihāras, the Solaṅkīs and the Chāhamānas, utilized this legend for explaining the origin of these dynasties.

In fine, the Agni-kula legend represents two myths—the Modern and the Mediaeval. The modern myth arose from the efforts of the scholars to interpret a mediaeval myth in terms of modern concepts, whereas the mediaeval represents the processes of the standardization and systematization of the stratified society of the times.

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INDEX

Adhirājendra Chola, 91, 92
Āgamas, 107, 147
Agni, ln., 167, 168, 169, 171
Agni-kula legend, the, 157-72
Ākhyāna, 2, 6, 8, 9, 13, 14, 21, 36, 38, 39, 58, 102
Akhyāyikā, 9, 14, 28, 36, 37, 39, 40, 44, 85, 90
Alberuni, 19
Ānandavardhana, 56, 151
Āṅgirases, 12, 13, 16, 22, 23, 24, 25, 34
Āraṇyakas, 7, 8, 9, 11, 17, 27n., 28, 36
Arthaśāstra, 3n., 7n., 9n., 19n., 27n., 70
Atharvaveda, 7, 12, 15, 120, 144, 162
Avantivarman, 56, 70, 164

Baṇabhaṭṭa, 21, 31, 32, 36, 37, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51, 55, 58, 71, 74, 85, 89, 90, 91, 93, 94, 98, 100, 108, 117, 141, 142, 143, 149, 150
  ancestry, 32-36
Bedla Inscription, 139
Bhāguri, 2
Bhandarkar, D.R., 158
Bhāradvāja, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 22, 23, 24, 25
Bharata, 6, 10, 11, 13, 25
Bharata (Sage), 38
Bhārgawas, 13, 14, 22, 23, 24, 25, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 52, 105
Bhartṛihari, 28
Bhāsa, 99
Bhṛigus, 12, 34, 52
Bhṛigvāṅgirases, 3, 4, 9, 12, 13, 14, 17, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 34, 37, 100, 114
Bijolia Inscription, 112, 115, 116, 120, 121, 122, 123-28, 129, 139, 165
Bilhaṇa, 59, 60, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 94, 98, 117, 141, 142, 146
  birth and background, 56-58
  leaves Kashmir, 57
  wanderings, 58
  appointed *Vidyāpati* by Vikramāditya, 58
  defence of Vikramaṅka 58-62, 69-72
  on Vikraṅka's birth, 62-64
  on heir-apparency of Vikrama, 64-65
  on Someśvara II's wickedness, 65-68
  allegations against Someśvara, 67
  on Śiva's command to Vikrama, 69
  wrangling about Jayasiṁha, 72-74
Bloomfield, M., 12n
Brahma-Kshatra theory, 112, 146, 164, 165, 166, 168, 169
Brāhmaṇas, 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 15, 17, 34, 36, 37, 38, 44, 74, 102
Bhahmaṇas (caste group) 5, 17, 22, 23, 24, 33, 34, 35, 56, 57, 105, 116, 146, 161, 162, 164, 165, 166, 167, 169, 170, 171
Brahmaṇspati, 5
Bṛihaddevatā, 2, 3n., 6, 7, 11, 16
Bṛihatkathā, 27, 44, 46, 49, 135, 145, 151
Buddhacharita, 21
Bühler, 56n., 65

Chāhamānas, 98, 99, 100, 101, 106, 132, 133, 135, 138, 139, 140, 144, 146, 147, 157, 159, 165, 172
  traditions of historical writings, 104-105
  culture-complex and historical works, 106-109
  origin, 110-15
  disclaim Brahmāṇic origin, 114
  story of Vāsudeva, 115-20
  traditions of their *Vaṁśa*, 120-24
  genealogy, 121
  Bijolia inscription, 122-28
Chakravartin, 74, 77, 78

Chālukyas, 58, 62, 63, 64, 66, 68, 69, 73, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 83, 85, 86, 92, 93, 101, 114, 125
Chandralekhā, 76, 77, 141
Cholas, 61, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 72, 73, 76, 78, 79, 91, 92, 94, 95
Collingwood, R.G., 80-81, 137n
Crooke, William, 158-59

Dhanapāla, 157
Dharmaśāstra, 20, 35, 59, 60, 78
Divinization of History, *see* History

Etymologists, historical, 144, 145

Gāthā, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 13, 16
Gāyatrī, 15, 16
Geldner, 1n., 3n., 9n., 10n.
Gupta Empire, 107, 108
Guptas, 28

Hammīra-Mahākāvya, 116, 120, 122, 139
Harivaṁśa, 13, 19, 20, 165
Harsha (King Harshavardhana), 21, 22, 31, 32, 36, 37, 43, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 52, 53, 55, 82, 88, 90, 93, 94, 100, 108, 140, 141, 142, 145, 149
  meeting with Rājyaśrī, 30-42
  author of Ratnāvalī, 41
  expedition against Gauḍas, 50-51
  exceptional qualities, 51, 55
  Rajya offers throne to, 53-54
Harshacharita, 14, 21, 88, 90, 91, 100, 101, 117, 141, 149
  a fresh approach to, 30-32
  historical traditions behind, 32-36
  and the *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition, 36-39
  as an *Ākhyāyikā*, 36-37
  Mahābhārata as model of, 37
  and *Ratnāvalī*, 39-44
  influence of ancient fiction on, 44-45
  events and characters, 45-55
  loose ends in, 52ff.
  compared with *Vikramāṇkadeva-charita*, 82, 141-43
Hillebrandt, 4n., 5n
Hiralal, Dr., 22
Historical narratives
  forms of, 3-8
  rise of, 21-26
  patterns and chronology, 26-29
  unity in, 45
  early medieval, 46
  history to be gleaned from, 137-49
Historical Traditions (Indian)
  beginnings, 1-29
  rise of, 1-3
  oral, 3, 7
  development of, 8-9
  influence of Bhṛigvāṅgirases, 9-14
  influence of Kāṇvas, 11ff.
  Sūtas and Vaṁśa Literature, 14-17, 18-21
  standardized, 18
  historical narratives, 21-29
  behind *Harshacharita*, 32-36
Historiography, Indian, 12, 25, 26, 52, 59, 74, 114, 130
  modern, 138ff.
History
  divinization of, 95-97
  Greco-Roman tradition, 100, 137
  tradition of Imperial, 110-15
  literary and mythological devices, 116, 120
  from historical narratives, 137-49
  modern concept of, 137ff.
Hiuen Tsang, 19, 141
Huṇas, 108

Indra, 1n., 4, 15, 38, 113
Itihāsa, 2, 3, 5, 6-7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 18, 19, 21, 27, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 45, 52, 58, 80, 90, 97, 113, 137, 138, 141
Itihāsa-Purāṇa Tradition, 36-39, 90, 112, 113, 114, 145, 146, 151

Jains, 19, 74, 121, 122, 128, 149, 150, 154-57
Jayānaka, 101, 117, 119, 121, 125, 126, 129, 130, 132, 134, 136, 145, 146, 147, 148
  in Chāhamāna court, 98
  account of himself in *Pṛithvīrājavijaya*, 99
  historian of Chāhamānas, 101
  adopts the pattern of *Lalita-Vigraharāja*, 106
  on Chāhamāna imperial tradition, 109
  on origins of Chāhamānas, 111, 112, 113
Jayasiṁha II, 61, 66, 72, 73, 88, 89
Jones, Sir William, 137n

Kādambarī, 36, 44, 50, 71, 98
Kadambas, 25, 114, 119, 144, 146, 155, 157
Kadambavāsa, 105, 106, 132, 133, 134, 136
Kalhaṇa, 20, 21, 56, 61
Kali-age, 107, 108, 113, 118, 147
Kālidāsa, 38, 76
Kāmasūtra, 40
Kāñchī, 66, 79, 86
Kāṇvas, 10, 11, 12
Karṇasundarī, 58, 75, 155
Kashmir, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 98, 99, 103, 108, 134
Kathā, 36, 44, 85, 150ff.
Kathāsaritsāgara, 44
Kātyayāna, 9
Kauṭilya, 20, 36
Kirātārjunīya, 98
Kanauj, 43, 46, 47, 58, 103
Kṛita age, 108, 111, 112, 113
Kshatriyas, 5, 59, 95, 112, 114, 139, 146, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165

Lalita-Vigraharāja, 105, 106, 108, 147
Līlāvati of Kutūhala, 151, 153
Macdonell, 7n
Mahābhārata, 7, 8, 9n., 12, 13, 17, 27n., 34, 35, 37, 38, 52, 102, 115, 154, 161, 167, 168
Mahābhāshya, 36, 39
Mānasollāsa, 84
Mandasor inscription, 107, 108
Manusmṛiti, 35
Mauryas, 18, 19
Medieval Formalism, 93-95
Merutunga, 90
Muhnot Naiṇsī, 157, 172
Muizz al-Din Muhammad of Ghor, 98, 104, 106, 135, 136, 148
Müller, Max, 17n

Nārāśaṁsī, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Navasāhasāṅkacharita, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 156, 157, 160, 167, 170, 171
Nirukta, 2, 6, 7, 27n., 70, 145

Ojha, Gaurishankar H., 158

Padmagupta, 141, 146, 149, 150, 155 156, 160, 163, 167
Pālās, 28, 75, 78
Pāṇḍyas, 92, 103
Pāṇini, 102
Parāśara, 10, 11, 14
Patāñjali, 9
Prabandha-Kośa, 115, 120, 121, 128
Prabhākara, 41, 46, 47, 48, 52, 53, 54, 55, 140, 141, 142
Primogeniture, principle of, 69, 70, 71
Pṛithvī-bhaṭa, 98, 104, 106, 133, 134
Pṛithvīrājavijaya, 98-136, 139
  fragmentary character, 98
  influence of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 99
  composition of, 99-100
  description of Chāhamāna Vaṁśa, 101
  combines traits of *Vijaya* and *Charita*, 103
  tradition of historical writings behind, 104

  and *Lalita-Vigraharaja*, 105-106
  socio-political conditions, 106-109
  origin of Chāhamānas, 111, 112
  Pṛithvīraja as Rama, 114
  story of Vāsudeva, 115-20
  traditions of Chāhamāna *Vaṁśa*, 120-24
  the *Vaṁśa* lore in, 129-30
  story of Pṛithvīraja III as given in, 130-36
Pṛithvīraja III Chāhamāna, 109, 120, 122, 129, 139, 140, 147, 148
  honours Jayānaka, 98
  incarnate of Hari, 99
  Rāma, archtype for, 99-100
  Bedla inscription, 111
  represented as Rāma, 114
  story of, 130-36
Purāṇa (form of historical composition), 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 18, 21, 35, 36, 90
Purāṇas, 8, 14, 17, 26, 35, 74, 90, 95, 107, 108, 113, 119, 144, 150, 154, 163, 164, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171
Purūravas, 6, 38, 85

Raghuvaṁśa, 20, 27, 99
Rājataraṅgiṇī, 21
Rajputs, 58, 59, 95, 158, 159, 160
Rājyaśrī, 30, 31, 32, 42, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 82, 140, 141
Rājyavardhana, 43, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 89, 90, 141, 142
Rāmānuja, 91
Rāmāyaṇa, 8, 9n., 13, 14, 16, 19, 21, 27, 99, 131, 132, 135, 154, 161, 162, 163, 167, 168
Rāshṭrakūṭas, 28, 67n., 71, 75, 78, 86, 97
Ratnāvalī, 27, 39, 41, 42, 43, 46, 47
Raychundhari, H.C., 171
Ṛigveda, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7n., 9, 10n., 11, 12, 34, 38, 101
Śaivas, 69, 70
Śakas, 18, 161, 162, 163
Śākaṭāyana, 2
Sāmaveda, 12, 17
Saṁhitās, 15, 16
Śankarāchārya, 113
Sātavāhanas, 18
Śaunaka, 2, 13, 37
Śilāpatti Kāraṁ, 71
Sindhurāja, 150, 152, 153, 157, 160
Smith, Vincent A., 158, 159
Smritis, 107, 113, 164
Śobhanarasa, 64
Somadeva, 104, 109
Someśvara Bhaṭṭa, 61
Someśvara I Āhavamalla, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 85, 86, 89, 94, 142
Someśvara II Bhuvanaikamalla, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 77, 87, 88, 89, 90, 93. 94, 143
Someśvara III, Bhūlokamalla, 88, 92, 94, 101
  son of Vikramāditya VI, 84
  author of *Vikramāṅkābhyudaya*, 84
  use of the device of divine element by, 89
  distorts facts about Someśvara II and Jayasiṁha, 89-90
  sets out against the Hoysaḷās, 92-93
  typical king of medieval period, 94
  and medieval formalism, 95
Sukthankar, V.S., 13, 35n
Śunaḥśepa, 6, 7
Śuṅgas, 18
Śūrjanacharita, 116, 120, 139
Sūtas, the, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 39
Śyāmala, 31, 34, 35, 37

Tailapa II, 86, 97, 103
Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, 2, 36, 165
Ṭakārī, 23, 24, 105
Tarain, battle of, 98, 104
Thanesar, 43, 46, 50, 54, 55, 142
Tilakamañjarī, 157, 160, 171

Tod, Col. James, 158, 159
Toynbee, Arnold, 18
Tradition, historical, *see* Historical traditions

Upanishads, 3, 7, 12, 17

Vākāṭakas, 25
Vālmīki, 8, 13, 60, 99
Vaṁśa literature, 14, 17, 18-21, 25, 26, 100, 101, 120
Varṇāśrama dharma, 108, 163, 164, 165, 166
Varuṇa, 15
Vāsishṭha(s), 3, 10, 11, 160, 161, 162, 163, 168, 171, 172
Vāsudeva, story of, 115-20, 123, 125, 126, 139, 144, 145
Vātsyāyana Brāhmaṇas, 32, 33, 34, 37
Vāyupurāṇa, 91
Vigraharāja IV, 104, 105, 106, 109, 110, 112, 122, 129
Vijaya Epics, origin and rise of, 100-104
Vijñāneśvara, 60, 84
Vikramāditya IV, 85, 86
Vikramāditya VI, 58, 59, 60, 61, 67, 84, 88, 92, 101, 141, 142, 143
  chastises Jayasiṁha II, 61, 62
  usurpation of Chalukya throne, 62
  imprisons Someśvara II, 62
  action defended by Bilhaṇa, 62
  pre-ordination for kingship, 62-64
  Bilhaṇa on his birth, 62-64
  offer of heir-apparency and refusal, 64-65
  governor of Gangavāḍi, 64, 65
  life threatened by Someśvara II, 65
  leaves the capital Kalyaṇa, 66
  offer of matrimony by cholá king, 66
  battle with brother Someśvara II, 66
  intrigues to usurp throne, 68
  Śiva's Command, 69
  his defence by Bilhaṇa, 69-72
  suppression of rebellion by Jayasiṁha, 72-74
  attainment of *Chakravartin* status, 74-80
  wins Chandralekha in *Svayaṁvara*, 76
  authenticity of *Svayaṁvara*, 77
  his conquests (*digvijaya*) 78-79
  his biography *Vikramāṅkābhyudaya*, 84-97
  birth described, 87
  growth and education, 87-88
  becomes heir-apparent, 88, 90
  sets out on conquest, 88
  incarnation of Vishṇu, 89, 93, 97
  personality of, 93-95
Vikramāṅkābhyudaya
  biography of Vikramāditya VI, 84
  incomplete manuscript, 84
  as an *ākhyāyikā*, 85, 88
  contents, 85
  genealogical account of Chālukyas, 85-86
  birth of Someśvara II, 87
  birth of Vikramāditya VI, 87
  growth and education of Vikramaditya VI, 87-88
  Vikramāditya VI anointed as heir apparent, 88
  Vikramāditya VI sets on *digvijaya*, 88
  device of divine element, 88-89
  distortions of facts, 89-90
  reasons for distortions, 90-93
  personality of Vikramāditya VI, 93-95
Vikramāṅkadevacharita, 56-83, 100, 101, 141, 155
  advice to Kings to patronise poets, 60
  date of composition, 61
  birth of Vikramaṅka, 62-63
  offer of heir-apparency to Vikrama and his refusal, 64-65

wickedness of Someśvara II, 65-68
false allegations against Someśvara II, 67
Śiva's command to Vīkrama, 69
Bilhaṇa's defence of Vīkrama, 69-72
Jayasiṁha's rebellion, 72-74
attainment of *Chakravartin* status by Vīkrama, 74-80
Svayaṁvara of Chandralekha, 76, 77
historicity of, 80-83
compared with *Harshacharita*, 141-43
Vikramorvaśīyam, 38
Vīr Rājendra, Chola King, 68
Vishṇuvardhana Hoysāḷā, 91, 92, 95
Viśvāmitra, 4, 10, 160, 161, 162, 163, 171
Vyāsa, 11, 20, 99, 113

Winternitz, 6n., 9n., 19n
World-view, Trancendental, 95-97

Yajñāvalkya, 20
Yajurveda, 12, 15, 16, 39
Yaśodharman, 107, 108